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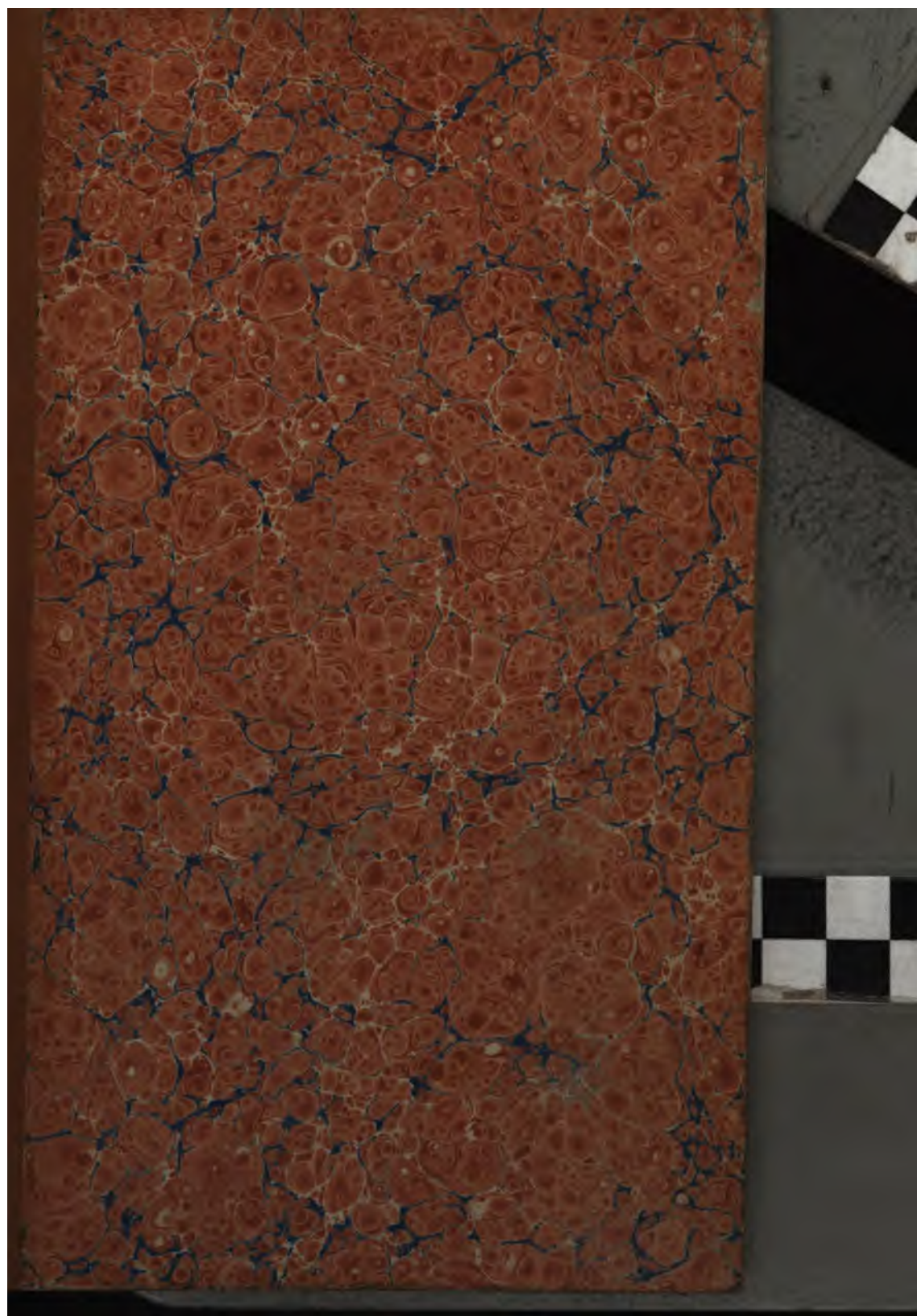
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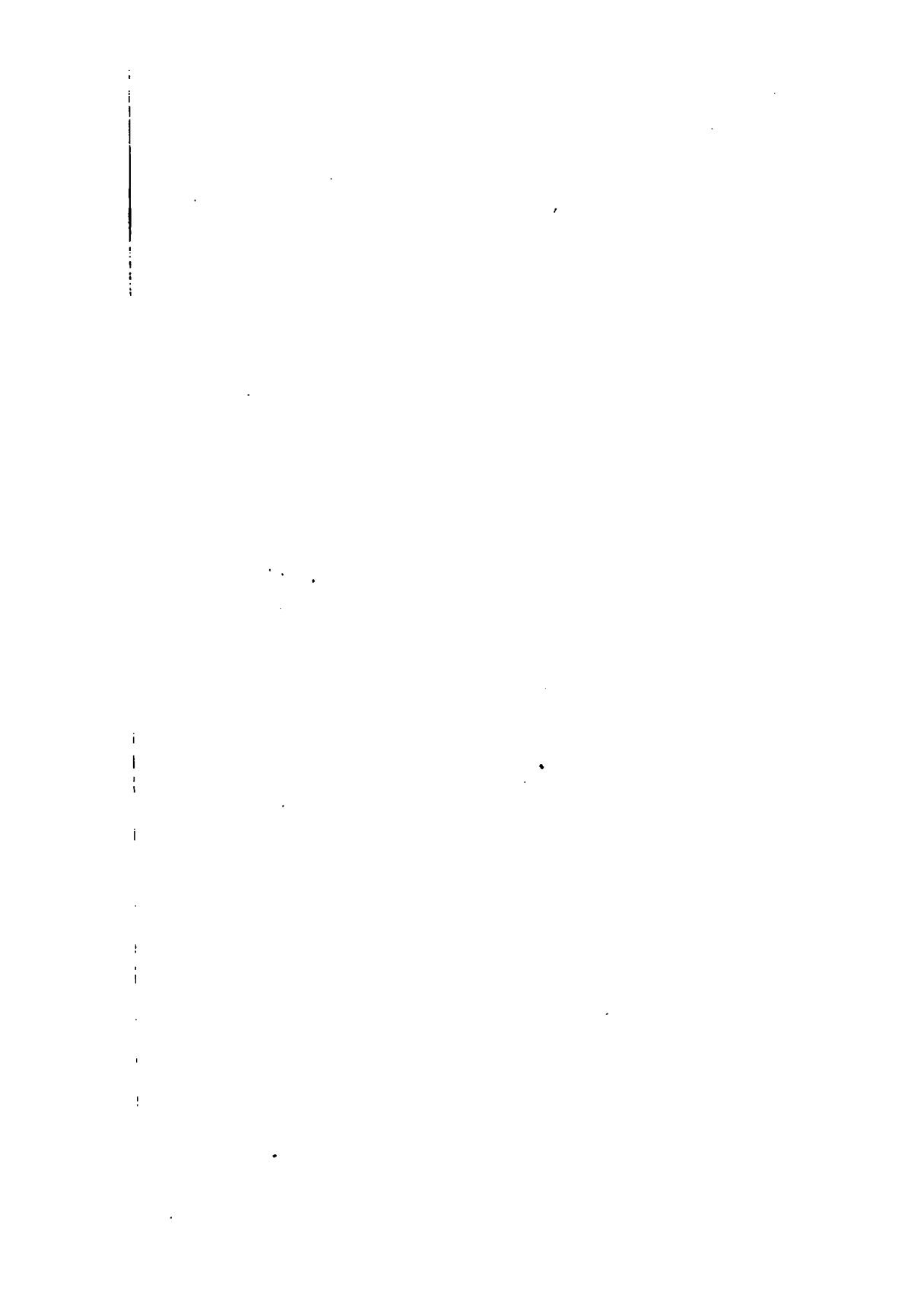
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*P. Long*

THE

# H O R A T I I :

A TRAGEDY.



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LONDON:

SMITH, ELDER, AND CO., 65, CORNHILL.

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1846.

*385.*

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## P R E F A C E.

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SINCE the following attempt at dramatic composition was sent to press, the writer, (an utter novice in such matters,) has ascertained that, no demand obtaining for unacted dramas, even when proceeding from far abler pens than his own, his pages must needs be unequally divided between personal friends and waste-paper purchasers. To the former class, he has a few words to offer, touching both the literary and moral bearings of the effort, to which he begs their kind attention.

He is quite aware that the production, (which, as they will perceive, is founded, in the main, on Livy's narrative of the combat between the Horatii and Curiatii, in the reign of Tullus Hostilius), would, in a literary point of view, have been open to unfavourable criticism on many grounds too obvious to require enumeration. In extenuation, however, of all its improprieties, he can only plead, that, not having been originally designed for publication, the work was written with less circumspection than he would have felt bound to exercise, had he dreamt, while writing it, of ever seeing it, as he now somewhat regrets to see it, in print.

But in regard to the moral bearings of the work, (a question of infinitely graver moment than that of its mere literary demerits,) the author is anxious to state, that he had aimed at producing a drama which, while affording in a greater or less degree, the class of enjoyment usually sought in dramatic reading, should have been characterized by greater regard to the melancholy nature and tendency of the principles by which the human heart is actuated in its natural state, than is ordinarily observable in dramatic compositions; and this, in connexion with



transactions which, (except, perhaps, in the incidental circumstance of the murder of the heroine,) would probably not be ordinarily considered criminal overmuch, when tested by any mere human code of morals. In the person of the heroine, he had supposed a being enjoying a certain kind and measure of holier influence, but operating in the midst of much of human ignorance, error, and corruption, so far as these would be naturally elicited by the circumstances of the time being.

Whether or not the writer had succeeded in producing a work, which, while in some degree entertaining as a drama, might, (*perused by the light of a scriptural acquaintance with christian affections, christian principles, christian morals, and christian ends,*) have profitably illustrated the lamentable nature and tendency of human principles and human practice, when left to their own workings, his friends must determine. He can only say, (and he thinks he can do so honestly), that not for any reward appertaining to what is called "literary success," had its attainment been never so practicable, would he have wished to have been the author of a solitary page, of which the propriety should have been in the least degree questionable, not merely in a moral but a religious point of view.

*London, Sept. 26, 1846.*

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

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### MEN.

TULLUS HOSTILIUS, *King of Rome.*

*The elder* HORATIUS.

HOSTUS,  
CAIUS, } *the Horatii.*  
MARCUS, }

METTUS FUFFETIUS, *proclaimed Dictator on the death of Cluilius,  
King of Alba.*

METIUS,  
QUINTUS, } *the Curiatii.*  
CÆLIUS, }

BUBO, *a Roman Citizen.*

*Roman and Alban Ambassadors, Citizens, Officers, Soldiery, &c.*

### WOMEN.

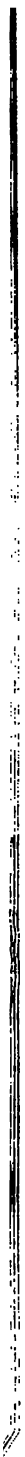
HORATIA, *Sister to the Horatii, secretly in love with Metius Curiatius.*

FAUNA, *betrothed to Marcus, one of the Horatii.*

MYSIS, *a maid, betrothed to Bubo.*

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N.B.—A lapse of forty-three days is supposed to have intervened between the first and second Acts.



## THE HORATII.

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### ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Roman Forum. A concourse of Citizens, Soldiery, &c.*

*Enter BUBO and three Citizens.*

*1st Cit.* Nothing to fight for?—Marry come up!—Why have we not everything to fight for?—Answer me this, master Bubo! Hath not Alba wrong'd us?—Hath she not scorn'd and as 't were made mouths on us?—Hath she not robb'd us?—Hath she not depredated on us?—Hath she not pilfer'd from us?—Answer me that, quotha'!—

*Bubo.* Go to :—go to :—if she hath robb'd us, we have robb'd her back again; and so is the account well enough squared up for that matter.

*1st Cit.* No; truly: for the matter of the robbery-reciprocal—it hath but given us back our goods; but it hath left the insult still to be reckon'd for. Marry!—how shall that be accommodated, except we be martially-avenged? By the gods! but I'll vote for war!

*Bubo.* Ah! we know how 'tis, neighbour! when our hearts are set on mischief, it shall go hard but our heads shall conjure up excuses eno' for their inclinings. The heart's the hatcher o' mischief, and then hires the head, (which is a sorry knave, ever ready to do the dirty work o' the heart at the heart's bidding,) to hatch justifications for 't! There was never evil thought in our head but our heart did first put it there.

*1st Cit.* Come, none of your moral magging!—I say, necessity is laid on us to give our Alban wrongers martial requital. And look ye too, my masters! how the Alban knaves bear them t'wards us of Rome! Why, a Roman cannot pass an Alban, but the Alban will look on him as who should say, "Out o' my way, fellow!"—I say, let's have war, my masters! War! War!

*All.* War! War! we will all give our votes for war!

*Bubo.* Ah! well; so will not I. I like not fighting for fighting's sake alone, and I'll never go, but whither my will leadeth;—self is the god of man, woman, and child, all the world over.—But hist! here comes master Marcus.—

*Enter* MARCUS HORATIUS.

*2nd Cit.* Worthy master Marcus ! a fair morning to you. Doth not King Tullus tarry somewhat long in the coming ?

*Mar. Hor.* Aye ! but he'll be here anon, neighbours, and then may you look to have brave doings ; that is, if we but second the King's wishes, wherein the Senators very heartily concur.

*1st Cit.* Have the Alban Ambassadors brought then message of defiance ?

*Mar.* Nay, I know not, for the King hath not yet given them audience ; being minded to get some inkling of King Cluilius' mind ere he broaches his own ; and of this shall he have the needful measure on the arrival of our Ambassadors who are expected each moment. But I must go my way, being to be near the King's person. [*Exit* MARCUS.]

*3rd Cit.* There goes a lad of mettle !

*2nd Cit.* Aye, truly ; he and his two brothers make up as pretty a leash of bold striplings as ever were born at a birth.

*1st Cit.* 'Twas somewhat of an odd hap, that in the very night that these three youngsters made old Horatius a glad father, their mother's sister (she that was wife to Curiatius the Alban, the twain being daughters to Sequinius the Alban) gave a like triple offspring to her husband.

*3rd Cit.* Aye, thou meanest the lads they call the "Curiatii." Truly was it ; but hist ! there are shouts away there. Here comes the King. [*Shouts, acclamations, &c.*]

*Enter* TULLUS HOSTILIUS attended, and ascends the Rostra.

*Officers.* Room there ; Room for King Tullus ! Peace all !

[*Acclamations subside.*]

*Tull. H.* Subjects ! and in so far as due degrees  
And wholesome difference of rank admit,  
Fellows and friends ! the time is come at length  
Wherein to make ye know how state affairs  
Stand 'twixt ourselves and they of Alba's soil.  
'Tis known to most of ye that we of late  
From this our neighbour have much wrong endured  
And galling provocation ;—that e'en now,  
We smart beneath the load of heavy shame  
Their recent outrage on us doth impose.  
Now, touching this, we lately to their King,  
(Out o' regard unto the ancient compact  
Which lays on each when by the other harm'd,  
To seek by peaceful suit—ere force be stirr'd—  
Meet recompense) an embassy dispatch'd.  
This embassy, but now hath back return'd,  
And ye our subjects with our royal self  
Will, jointly and together, hear their tale  
And thereupon decree what course to take.

Yet knowing what we know, (for we have ey'd  
With careful watch, the bearing of our friend,)  
We dare not hope she will deign such reply  
As we may undisgrac'd with patience hear ;  
For we do nothing doubt our haughty foe  
Had a set purpose in the late assault,  
Itching to goad us into open war.

How say ye then !

(For we would lovingly your counsel ask)  
If that our friend shall send us surly speech ;  
And show him well dispos'd to mould the future  
Upon the pattern of th' offensive past ;  
Shall we in craven silence pass it o'er ?  
Shall Rome that stands on soil as good as theirs ;  
That may lay claim to full as stout a fame ;  
Hath as bold sons to battle for her rights ;  
Lacks naught that Alba boasts ; shall Rome I say  
Submissive brook her haughty rival's scorn,  
And meekly suffer her design'd affronts ;  
Thereby but tempting her to harder tread  
On our too humble necks ?—it were foul wrong  
Unto your valour, Romans ! to bethink  
That of such sires born, ye should have heart  
In such an hour to do otherwise  
Than hurl a stout defiance at your foes.  
For our own part, as by the gods set o'er ye,  
(Through operation of your suffrages)  
To cater for your good, we do adjudge  
That when two states do thus fall by the ears,  
War's their best umpire ; other go-between  
There's none that may so well their strife adjust.  
How say ye, Romans ! then,—  
Are ye content to put your valours to 't,  
And to yourselves be true, should Alba fail  
To mend her manners t' wards the state of Rome ?

*All.* War ! War ! War ! we will follow the valiant Tullus ! we  
will not fail the valiant Tullus ! War ! War ! we will not be thrust  
to the wall of Alba !

*Tull. H.* Most heartily we thank ye for your loves.

Go now and bid our delegates appear ;

[*Exit an Officer.*]

Whose story heard, we audience will extend

To Alba's spokesmen who have hither come

Professedly remonstrance to enact

Touching the fair reprisals of our folk,

(Which they do falsely call the senior,

And first-born act of grievance turning thus

Of the events the sequence upside down.)

[*Stir without.*]

*Enter ROMAN AMBASSADORS.*

Welcome, good servants!—Now before ourself,  
And this our brave array of subjects loyal,  
Straitly detail on what wise ye have sped!

*1st Amb.* With rapid steps we reach'd the city's gates  
Ere yet the day had grown unto its prime;  
And in the public Forum o' the city,  
Did spy Cluilius seated :—he, when we  
Approach'd and clear'd our throats to tell our tale,  
Abruptly stay'd us, calling with loud voice,  
(As though he'd put Peace out o' countenance).

“Why come ye here to vex us with pretence,

“And affectation of a peaceful suit?

“We have sent messengers unto your King,

“Unto no end;—your hearts are set on war,

“Just restitution ye from us withhold,

“And drive us to draw sword in our behalves.

“Return to him who sent ye, and say thus—

“Alba no longer will be duped of Rome

“But is at war with her.”

*Tull. H.* We look'd to get as much; our eager friend

Hath much ado his longings to withstand:

So moved is he his mask doth slip aside

Shewing his true complexion underneath.

What answer made ye to his royal rebuff?

*1st Amb.* That we naught brought with us but peaceful speech,

And in pursuance of old covenant

Made suit to him, ere that we on us took

To right ourselves; that peace was Rome's heart's wish;

But if hard words and menace arrogant

Made up his answer, peradventure Rome

Might with an equal briskness threaten too.

This with accusation,—

That he was foremost in decreeing war,

Made all our speech; for hot Cluilius bade us,

With angry mien and gesture most abrupt,

In haste depart, and tell our friends at Rome

The war they so craved after might begin

As speedily as their good leisure serv'd.

*Tull. H.* Rome shall not shame herself to make him wait.

Go thitherward conduct their embassy;

Whom we have somewhat overreach'd, and made

To keep their mission i' their own breast coop'd,

Until we had wherewith to test their tale.

'Twill be a task to keep our smiles in check

While, ignorant of what meanwhile hath hap't,

These honest souls do prate of Alba's love

[*Exit Officer.*]

And peaceful dispositions.  
Ye see, good friends ! how that our estimate  
Of our most worthy neighbour's purposes,  
Hath by th' event, been proved a goodly guess.

[Uproar.]

*Enter the ALBAN AMBASSADORS.*

We greet ye, heartily, good friends ! alb't  
Upon the intercourse which 'twixt our states  
Aforetime held, the clouds to gather seem.  
Of state affairs, the pressure did estop us  
From granting earlier audience, for which  
We of your royal master pardon crave :  
But now we'll hear ye right attentively.

*1st Amba.* It irks us much, most brave Hostilius !  
To be the carriers of sore complaint  
On Alba's part against her friends of Rome ;  
And we do crave,—

*Tull. H.* Friends ! to the point—turn all excuse adrift ;—  
We shall not bite ye, that ye do the task  
Your betters lay upon ye.

*1st Amba.* Thus then it is :—

The brave Cluilius doth Hostilius greet ;—  
And greatly grieves that 'twixt their sev'ral states  
Should step in cause of quarrel ; not the less,  
That in times past their friendship flourish'd well.  
But so it is that Rome hath by her folk,  
(And regally commission'd as some say),  
At divers seasons, and in many ways,  
Made on our soil irruptions violent,  
And otherwise upon us thrust offence.  
Hereon, in mere self-justice, Alba's state  
Of Rome doth seek that compensation,  
Which here upon her part we must demand.

*Tull. H.* It looks not well that our royal neighbour  
Should 'gainst her own apt pupils lodge complaint ;—  
To blame what we do teach is to accuse  
One-self by proxy :—Alba was the first  
To pick and steal from out her neighbour's stores,  
And set example of light-finger'dness :—  
Our own poor theft hath but the reck'ning squared.

*1st Amba.* Rome errs in laying it to Alba's charge  
That she first broke their law of fellowship ;  
Rome was the first aggressor, gallant king !  
So must we urge that she to Alba make  
(For sake o' peace which much Cluilius covets)  
Such restitution as the case demands.

*Tull. H.* For peace, we love her pr'aps as heartily  
As doth Cluilius ;—but may not woo her



With courtship craven and unmanly, Sirs !  
 We're men, my friends ! nor may our manhood slur  
 By bowing low to all that on us scowl,  
 And make demand where there is naught of claim.  
 We do deny the rights your king asserts ;  
 And charge, as he is duly cognizant,  
 Alba was first to play the pilferer.

*1st Amba.* Then Rome must answer it to Alba's sword,  
 That this her peaceful suit doth stand dismiss'd.

*Tull. H.* We are not apt to quake at threats and frowns  
 Alb't of Alban growth ;—if that your King  
 Hath it in mind to cram on us affronts ;  
 Ye may go tell him that the men of Rome  
 Hold themselves such, and amply ready are  
 To put to proof the mettle of his swords.

[*Acclamations.*]

*1st Amba.* Since Rome thus Alba speaks, it were not meet  
 Alba should answer Rome with fairer words :—  
 Therefore, upon our country's part, we do  
 Declare her at full enmity with Rome.

[*Uproar.*]

*Tull. H.* Full enmity, saidst thou ?—why, gallant sirs !  
 'Twas done or ere ye spake ; and by your King  
 In's own person to our trusty servants.  
 This counterfeit petition and appeal  
 Hath been a sorry farce ; and were it not  
 That three and thirty days must intervene  
 By war-like custom, ere the sword be drawn ;  
 Or ere we older were than by a day,  
 We'd be a day's march nearer Alba's walls.

[*Renewed shouting.*]

*1st Amba.* Thou need'st not, Tullus ! overmarch thyself ;  
 Alba will traverse her fair half o' the soil  
 That lies betwixt her and her forward foe.

*Tull. H.* So be it, then, so be it ;—by the gods,  
 We feel our spirit burn to try your prowess :—  
 And since so fair occasion hath arose,  
 We shall not weep o'ermuch to come to cuffs.  
 Yet do we call th' immortal gods to witness,  
 Alba hath brought to pass this sturdy broil ;  
 Nor shall we doubt a jot that they above  
 Will put upon ye all the penalties  
 That hang on prosecution of this feud.

*1st Amba.* Of that be umpire the thrice glorious Mars !  
 Tullus ! farewell—and, men of Rome ! adieu :—

The god of war must judge 'twixt us and you ! [*Exeunt Ambassadors.*]

*People.* Most valiant Tullus !—valorous Tullus !—We burn to  
 follow Tullus to the wars—Vengeance 'gainst Alba !

*Tull. H.* So then we be defenders in this strife.

Be instantly our subjects called to arms ;  
 And, without stay, our valiant allies too,  
 To bear proportion in this enterprize.

We shall be time enough, my gallant friends !—  
 Our valours making half of our array,  
 Scant cause there is we might not march to-day.

[*Acclamations, Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—*In the elder HORATIUS' House.*

HORATIA *alone.*

*Horatia.* The great gods grant that peace may yet survive !  
 It will go hard with me an' war ensue ;  
 Both sides well wishing, I must needs get grief  
 When one must be the loser ;—  
 Oh ! this poor heart o' mine shall fare but ill  
 Whilst love of Metius doth with that compete  
 I bear the sharers of my flesh and blood ;  
 And like a troubled city rent in twain  
 By hostile factions, whose supporters are  
 Alike her children, and alike belov'd ;  
 Most piteous shall its distractions be.— [Shouts heard.  
 Again those shouts !—Ah me ! Ah me !—I fear  
 The god of war hath got most partizans.

*Enter MY SIS.*

How goes the bus'ness o' the Forum, Girl ?

*Mysis.* 'So please you, mistress ! the assembled crowds  
 Are wedg'd so thick, I could not near the place  
 Where royal Tullus speaks our messengers ;—  
 But others tell me Alba leans to war.

*Horatia.* Go forth again yet later news collect. [Exit MY SIS.  
 I have been musing of love's younger days.  
 And so it was that very oftentimes  
 Whilst Rome and Alba were at amity,  
 The Curiatii sought my father's roof  
 From the mere force of cousinly regard.  
 And 'twas our wont together then to stray  
 At eventide along the Tiber's shores  
 And there, in leisure ramble and converse,  
 Beguile away day's unexpired hours.  
 It was one night when we had later wander'd  
 Than was our wont, and were in act to bend  
 Our footsteps homeward, by the moon's wan light,  
 A grisly wolf did skulk across our path,  
 And Metius' brethren with th' Horatii  
 Did dart aside to track him to his lair.  
 I, moist with terror, sank upon the earth  
 And scarce could stir a limb ; when gently he  
 Upraised me from off the humid ground ;—  
 "And come ;"—quoth he—"they're match eno', methinks,

"For yon lone straggler ;—Cousin ! thou and I  
 "Will homeward wend, for even is far spent,  
 "And night's chill dews are falling rapidly."  
 Forth we departed, and upon our way  
 Somewhile walked silently ; 'till at the last,  
 Metius did gently woo me for my love.  
 I gave it him ; and from that self-same hour  
 He did grow very dear unto my soul,  
 And to my father's dwelling oftener came,  
 Striving by honest means to earn's esteem.  
 But (for that he did never prate of war,  
 Or brag that he did love it more than peace ;  
 And that he ne'er did join with hearty zest  
 In their discourse, but rather sometimes strove  
 To temper and restrain their braggart talk)  
 My sire lov'd him little, and my brothers  
 Did ever hold him in ungen'rous hate.  
 This noting, we did hidden keep our loves,  
 For their avowal hoping kindlier times.  
 But now, alas !—again those cruel shouts !  
 Ah me ! I fear 'twill end in rupture yet.

[*Shouts heard.*

*Re-enter MYSIUS.*

Now, girl ! what news ?—quick, let me know the worst !

*Mysius.* The Alban embassy is hasting home  
 With message of defiance :—War's decreed !

[*Exit.*

*Enter hastily the elder HORATIUS.*

*Horatia.* Hath Rome and Alba's friendship breath'd its last ?

*Horatius.* Aye ! marry, hath it, wench ! and lazy peace  
 That is true valour's dry-rot—the drone's toy,—  
 Hath gone elsewhere to seek a dwelling-place.  
 It is decreed that Alba's froward scorn  
 At length shall reap its righteous chastisement ;—  
 Now Roman valour shall pick up employ,  
 And by this just occasion hired out  
 Be put once more to proof :—Thy brothers too,  
 Shall now have room to make themselves renown'd !  
 Lik'st not the thought ?—Why, wherefore fall these tears ?

*Horatia.* Oh ! I could weep  
 Mine eyes from out their sockets, when I think  
 How many sorrows this untoward strife  
 Shall rain down on our heads !

*Horatius.* Now by the gods ! where got ye this tame soul,  
 That so unroman is in all its moods ?  
 Girl ! I have seen the battle field when strewn  
 With rotting corpses, stretch'd on the lank grass,  
 Which by their crimson and congealed blood

Was glued in matted tufts ; their metal raiment  
Dimm'd by the weather's moisture ; their whole forms  
Made hideous by the bloody characters  
The foe's keen-whetted sword had on them grav'd ;  
While filthy vultures, group'd about the dead,  
Urg'd on their loathsome meal and from the many  
Had eat away all likeness to themselves :—  
E'en at such time, I've seen the dead men's kin,  
The parent, sister, nay, the recent wife,  
(But wedded to be widow'd in a trice,)  
Stooping in anxious survey o'er their dead,  
More bent upon the manner of their death  
Than on the death itself ; and well content  
If from their place, their wounds but certified  
They had not turn'd their backs upon the foe.  
Do thou do likewise ; thus the matter judge :—  
Wear thou a Roman soul :—for mark you this,  
Thou hast a personal interest at stake ;—  
If thou art better kinsman'd than the rest,  
Why of the rest thou dost take precedence,  
Though thou thyself art, in thyself, no better.  
In the repute of men renown'd, their kin  
Participants and shareholders become ;—  
And if thy brothers fame accumulate,  
Thou'lt be the nobler for 't.

*Horatia.* Oh ! that the foe were any state but Alba !

*Horatius.* What's Alba more than any other state  
That seeks to harm us ?—Is't for that  
Thy cousins are among her youth enroll'd,  
The sometime playmates of thy silly youth ?  
Go to :—why this should keener edge thy joy ;  
Nurse the proud hope to see thy brothers rear'd  
In triumph's posture o'er their Alban kin ;—  
That thou may'st boast that of two sisters, she  
That bound her to a Roman, brought her state  
A better progeny, than she that took  
An Alban for her mate.—But, hist ! here's Marcus.

*Horatia (aside)* Oh ! that a father's words, spoke i' the  
dark,  
Should thus a daughter's anguish aggravate !

*Enter* MARCUS and FAUNA.

*Horatius.* My noble boy ! what say you to the times ?

*Fauna.* O Sir ! he's in a martial ecstasy !

*Marcus.* Yes, Sir ! I burn e'en now to be afield ;—  
Breast-high immersed i' the moving pomp  
And spectacle of spirit-stirring war.  
E'en now, methinks, the rousing scene unfolds ;

The serried ranks, in close array dispos'd,  
 With helm and buckler glancing in the sun ;—  
 Methinks I see a host of flashing swords,  
 And a thick forest of bright glistening spears,  
 With pompous banners waving i' the midst :—  
 Methinks mine ears drink in the din of sounds,—  
 The neigh of horses—the loud crash of arms—  
 The blast of trumpets, mingling with the shouts  
 Of lusty heroes closing in the fight !  
 Oh ! seeing, hearing, sounds and scenes like these ;  
 How grows the martial soul solicitous  
 To crop delay, and leap into the hour  
 Of lusty action !

*Horatius.* Thou sayest well ;—but thy soft sister here  
 Had rather have thee stay at home and spin !

*Fauna.* Now, fie for shame ! *Horatia*—fie for shame !

[*Converses apart with Horatius.*]

*Marcus.* Nay, sister ! art thou so unorthodox ?  
 Nay, but a word with thee :—thou 'rt sad at heart ;—  
 I've noted thee of late, and seen thee weep.  
 Good now, what foul mischance hath thee subdued  
 Under fell sorrow's jurisdiction,  
 And of their crimson beauties robb'd thy cheeks ?

*Horatia.* I cannot tell thee, *Marcus*, what's amiss.

*Marcus.* Nay, sister, then the cause will I unfold ;—  
 This little heart, methinks, the owner lacks  
 That's proper to its years :—it hath outgrown  
 Its nonage, and doth pine to have a lord :—  
 Come, sister ! come ;—  
 As gamesome urchins must their playthings have,  
 So maidens must have sweethearts to be pleas'd ;—  
 Of life each stage hath toys appropriate ;—  
 Childhood, its cockhorse ;—youth, its jealous love ;—  
 Manhood, ambition ;—and old age, his chest !  
 Then to the Campus Martius come away,  
 Where throng Rome's gallant sons, and pick a mate  
 Having an outside shall thy fancy hit,  
 Yet of a soul enfeoff'd that may not put  
 Thy judgment to the blush :—soft ! who comes here ?

*Enter Hostus and Caius.*

*Hostus.* Brother ! we're bidden to attend the King,  
 To execute some offices of trust  
 That to th' impending warfare do pertain.

*Marcus.* Why, have with ye.—*Fauna* ! my mettled lass,  
 Farewell awhile !

*Horatius.* I'll with ye to the Forum,  
 And in this martial bustle have a share !

*Marcus.* My silly sister ! prithee merrier grow  
Ere that we do return.

[*Exeunt.*

*Manent HORATIA and FAUNA.*

*Fauna.* Why art so sad ?

*Horatia.* Nay, let it content thee to know that this war doth  
go very sorely to the contrary of my liking.

*Fauna.* Pah ! thou 'rt a very craven, and meritest not to be  
brother'd as thou art :—now art thou one of those meek wenches  
that cannot bear that lusty fellows should match might 'gainst  
each other, to the growth of manhood and the gaining of  
glory !—For mine own part, I do very heartily thank the gods,  
that these musty manhood-rotting times o' peace are turn'd out  
o' doors at last ; for truly the men were fast growing degenerate,  
and i' the next generation, methinks, would have lack'd even the  
mettle o' maids !

*Horatia.* But what if Marcus should fall in these wars ?

*Fauna.* 'Tis a risk must be run as being e'en part o' the price,  
whereat glory vendeth her merchandise :—and thou knowest the  
end can but be purchased by payment o' the means.

*Horatia.* Nay, I could be well content that the end should be  
lacking, so that the means might only remain unspent.

*Fauna.* Yea ! and have men grow mere milksops ; mere sem-  
blances of manhood ; males in virtue of their beards only, not of  
their mettle ! Thou would'st have them, I warrant me, mere  
good, peaceful, home-biding souls,—honest, harmless creatures,  
getting their bread by tilling o' the earth and the like worthy  
vocations—walking out with their wives at even when foul  
weather should hinder not—most parentally taking turns with  
their good wives i' the nursing their children and the like.  
Pah ! I'd die a spinster, ere I could let such a non-man call me  
wife ! I am verily sick at the mere thought of having the sex  
so dismanhooded !

*Horatia.* But thou knowest my brother Marcus for a youth of  
mettle and high-blooded. Why art not therewith content ?

*Fauna.* That I do well believe him to be such as thou sayest,  
may not be made a question ; an' I had counted him otherwise,  
I do believe in mine heart I should have lent him a box o' the  
ears what time he first woo'd me to wed him ;—for that a man  
should have naught but the mere naked warmth of his affection  
to plead in the warranty of his suit, were to me the most un-  
sufferable unworthiness :—But then must I have his mettle vouched ;  
—certified by deeds—put into action ! else how shall the world  
know on't ?—how should the world take knowledge that I have  
got so right worthy and notable a spouse ? How should they  
envy me, how do me honour i' the respect of him ?

*Horatia.* Why, what matter's the world's thoughts—he were  
thine husband, not the world's—Is't not so ?

*Fauna.* Pah ! thou talkest like a very dunce i' the ways o' the

world. Know'st not, that in all attainments the world's verdict is the best half o' the guerdon? To be admired or envied of others is what all live for, whether they own it or not; th' intrinsic worth of a thing is a light matter, an' the humanly reputed worth with it quadrate not.

*Horatia.* Nay, in this matter thy thoughts and mine are in nowise of a colour. Is there nothing within us doth whisper that these things should not be! Alas! for human principles!

*Fauna.* Pah! we are i' the world, and of the world, and to do other than the world doeth is to make ourselves the world's bugbears—'tis to make ourselves exiles of our own banishing. Put aside the world's appraisement and thou would'st bring all worthy achievements to a standstill. Why 'tis thus with our virtues marry then, let it be thus with our humours. What man is he that's honest, good, honourable, magnanimous, heroical, patriotic and the like—and doeth if not that he may be glorified of his fellows,—of the select few or the mix'd many?—Think'st thou there are any that be bona fide virtuous—virtuous from the heart—virtuous for conscience sake?—Pish! that man can be such as of himself, 'tis a fable of your philosophers; of the which divine folk, as they be called, the practice beliieth the theory. There be many of 'em have been mightily moral i' their pages—that have yet been mightily the reverse behind the backs o' their adorers; some o' the best reputed amongst them do stand worse than suspected of very frail tricks. Pish!—virtuous for conscience-sake, forsooth?—Ere man be that he shall need to be made over again.

*Horatia.* Alas! methinks 'tis even so: but how then cometh it we be on such good terms with ourselves?

*Fauna.* Bah! all natures be self-tolerant. Blushes the vulture for his voracity—the wolf for his ferocity—the fox for his ill-odour? Self-love's a principle that discusseth not its object's worthiness: be that or fair or foul, or vile or precious, 'tis still self, and therefore love elicits. We are that we are, marry, then let's follow our own liking; for what is it to be happy, but to have that which we covet. For conscience, let it go hang so long as it shall choose to be th' opponent o' the will.

*Horatia.* Aye! but what if we shall one day be judg'd of the law of our conscience, as the voice within us adviseth us we shall?

*Fauna.* Pah!—fables to frighten fools withal. E'en let that take its chance. But a truce to this! As I said the praise or the envy of others all men yearn after; and shall not women honour their example i' the observance on 't? Aye truly; and when I wed, it shall be to be proud o' my husband,—and to have my fellow-maids envy me my bridegroom! I'll wed on such wise as some young high-mettled wench joins to some long-purs'd, old, gout-ridden citizen: that she may flourish and flaunt it the more bravely 'fore others by dint of free using his pelf.

So would I have *Marcus* come to be a hero, ere he come to be my husband, that in the lustre of his great fame I may, in the joint-tenures of wedlock, flaunt it the more proudly among my fellows.

*Horatia.* And call you this a love of affection?

*Fauna.* Nay, I know not, but 'tis a love to my liking—and to be well-pleased is to gain one's end, than which success goeth not further. But I must away, for thou art but sorry company for a wench of my humour. Adieu! I go to learn how matters grow for the war. [*Exit.*

*Horatia.* At every corner meets my harass'd soul  
Unpurpos'd stimulation of its pain!

And what's my crime,  
That I should punish'd be thus cruelly?  
My love was not my act, I did become  
The crafty god's bondswoman unawares,  
As sleeping men may be of gyves enchain'd  
While recking naught of their captivity.  
Love gave no warning, sent no herald first;  
But took advantage, and with subtle stealth  
Stole unawares upon me, ere that caution  
Could make all fast and bar his power out.  
And now I cannot from my heart dislodge him.  
That heart, wherein love once hath footing got,  
Can no more to its loveless state return  
By its own act alone, than ripen'd manhood  
Can into youth resolve itself again!  
Ah me! Ah me! I'm in an evil case;  
And many woes do stare me i' the face.  
Yet soft! I'll not upon my sorrow dwell,  
But strive to hope all yet may finish well:  
I'll ply the gods with fervent prayer to send  
Less bitter issue than the times portend. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—A Room.

*Enter MYNIS and BUBO.*

*Bubo.* But, pretty mistress *Mynis*, if I should hap to lose a leg or an arm in these same wars, wilt thou love me the less?

*Mynis.* Nay! I will not the less love thee, *Bubo*! but I shall love thee the less; for thou wilt be the less, an' thou losest thy limbs in the fray.

*Bubo.* Thou'rt both a sweet wag and most sweet wench, pretty *Mynis*!—beseech ye, a kiss for thy pleasantry!

*Mynis.* Now, prithee be peaceable, good *Bubo*! Think'st thou I have any mind to be roystering thus with ye, and my poor lady, mistress *Horatia*, so sad at heart?

*Bubo.* What, is she sad?

*Mynis.* Sad? I warrant ye—she hath never held up her head since the two states fell a-quarrelling.



*Bubo.* Nay, doth she take it to heart so much ?

*Mysis.* Doth she not, quotha ? I trow she hath never naturally smiled since the rupture first began ;—but none heed her ; for her father and her three brothers, like the rest o' the folk, are so agog to be going a-battling and glory-getting, that none note her pining—but to my mind, Bubo ! she is but in a poor way.

*Bubo.* 'Tis a most sweet lady !

*Mysis.* There's not her match in town or country for goodness :—If there be such a thing as a good woman, methinks she is one. She cannot abide the thought of this throat-cutting !—Ah me ! I would we were living in King Numa's time, Bubo ! for there was none o' this battling then.

*Bubo.* Aye, marry ! and so would I,—for then was there no soldiering to send love-making to the wall. Marry ! I will partake a kiss to the memory of King Numa !

*Mysis.* Now, Bubo ! be quiet :—but there's another cause that sets my poor lady a-grieving.

*Bubo.* So, so, what's that ?

*Mysis.* Oh Bubo ! I would I could trust thee.

*Bubo.* Why thou would'st never fear to do't !

*Mysis.* Can'st thou keep a secret, in very sooth can'st thou, Bubo ! Wer't thou to let it slip thee when I have told it, thou would'st be my death so sure as thou art Bubo !

*Bubo.* Say'st thou so ?—then torture shall not fetch it out o' me :—come, reveal !

*Mysis.* Well then, I am sure in mine own heart that my sweet lady is in love with one of her Alban cousins.

*Bubo.* So, so ; sits the wind i' that quarter ?—and doth he requite her ?

*Mysis.* I'll die for't he doth !

*Bubo.* I respect him ;—I venerate him :—I've a most brotherly affection for any man that's in love. An' I come across him i' these wars, by my valour but I'll give him double quarter :—but which o' the three is it, think'st thou ?

*Mysis.* Truly, he they call Metius.

*Bubo.* I know him ; a goodly youth and well-favour'd, but withal somewhat o'er proud, methinks. Is't not so ?

*Mysis.* Aye, folks were wont to call him proud, and contemptuous, and a herd of like titles to boot ; but, to my mind, he was the very sweetest gentleman that ever went a-wooing.

*Bubo.* Truly, mistress Mysis ! methinks thou mightest have said the very sweetest gentleman save one ;—but I know thee ; therefore, on with thy tale.—

*Mysis.* Well, 'tis so, that my sweet mistress hath none that doth care for her, man woman and child are all gone mad about these wars, and are all so cock-a-hoop to go a hero-ing ! Her father and her brothers heed her not—and even mistress Fauna, (she that's betroth'd to young Marcus) is like the rest ; and so hot to see Rome and Alba at fisticuffs and glory-a-getting, that I think

she'd as leave have a burial as a bridal, if young Marcus could only come to his death heroically as they call 't:—I believe in my heart, she had rather bury him as a dead hero, than marry him as a living man:—well; now my young lady being of another temper, and we all studying our own likings 'fore those of others, it being our nature to do so,—she hath no like relish with them, and no mind to lose a lover or a brother, merely that Rome forsooth may get a trifle more famous. So can she get no sympathy from her kindred, who would only pish at her soft thoughts.

*Bubo.* Aye, thou sayest truly:—Every one is for turning hero; by my valour! but my humour jumps not with theirs, and every man to his own liking, say I.

*Mysis.* Well! now thou knowest Bubo, or thou oughtest to know, that when two fond lovers be parted, to get tidings one from other doth mightily sweeten the bitterness of being sundered.

*Bubo.* I do conceive thee, Mysis! I do well believe it.

*Mysis.* Then to come to the point, Bubo:—would'st thou for my sake, (and fell it out that my lady should so desire it,) be now and then bold to run on an errand of love for her as occasion might serve?

*Bubo.* What, to the enemy's camp?—nay! but there might be danger in such errands;—marry! I might be caught and counted for a traitor or a spy! I do smell risk i' thy project!

*Mysis.* Now, Bubo! though I'll forgive thee for being not ready to go a-heroing like the rest o' thy fellows, I will never forgive thee an' thou art backward to run a trifle o' risk for my poor lady in her necessities of love. Were she a maiden of another temper, she might go hang for me: but seeing she is as one of ourselves, for the matter of her being in love, I do mightily desire to stand by her; and if thou'lt go, I'll love thee better than ever.

*Bubo.* I'll do't:—'fore Mars! I'll do't:—yea, though I go near to put my neck in a halter!—I'll do't, I say:—first and chiefly for thy sake:—secondly, for mine own sake, as being all one with thy sake:—thirdly, for my poor lady's sake, as being in the love-fit like ourselves:—and fourthly and lastly, for my brother-in-love's sake; for an' it be meet that brothers-in-arms should run risks for each other, I do hold there is treble reason that brothers-in-love should do so. Therefore count on me, sweet Mysis! and dispose me as thou shalt see fit.

*Mysis.* That's my own good Bubo: and beware that thou keepst the secret double-locked i' thy heart. Now I must away to my mistress for she tarrieth for me.

*Bubo.* But, Mysis! wilt not take a stroll down the Tiber at even?

*Mysis.* Aye, if thou'lt promise to grow more discreet i' thy 'haviour, for thou dealest but too freely with me before folk; and thy kissing and toying do make us the talk o' the whole city. So farewell for this present.

[*Exit.*]

*Manet BUBO.*

*Bubo.* So go thy ways for a most excellent wench. Well ; how a man should prefer warring to wooing is that my wit cannot fathom. For mine own part (and there never was man that did not worship his own liking) I'd rather woo a maid than whack a man any day i' the whole kalendar. But so say not my neighbours. "Bubo!" say they, "thou'rt a soft ape ; thou'rt without manhood ; not better to love courting glory i' the wars, than wooing a silly wench up in corners!" Aye, but say I, hath mistress Glory pretty blue eyes, like Mysis ? It is not profess'd :—Hath she a pretty peeping foot—nice curly locks—and a dear little heart, like Mysis ? 'Tis not pretended :—Hath she sweet coral lips, like Mysis ? No, truly ; they cannot so feign her :—Why, then, mistress Glory cannot be kissed ! No, surely :—Why, that's a fault ; for from the bottom o' my soul, I do hold this same kissing, when lawful and honest, to be a most superlative enjoyment. So then (that I may not do despite to mine own self, which were but a rotten policy,) I'll bide of the old mind still, and if, without turning traitor, I can bring home a whole skin, I'll not come back with so much as a scratch. I'll fight just so much as shall shew me no coward, but for the turning a hero—I'll turn bachelor-perpetual first. No ! glory-getting for heroes—love-making for Bubo. I'd rather be sweet-heart to Mysis, than king of a score kingdoms. *[Exit.*

SCENE IV.—*A Street in Alba.**Enter METIUS CURIATIUS*

*Metius.* So, then, these hungry Kings have tinker'd up  
A war 'twixt us and Rome :—That gentle maid,  
How doth she bear it ?—I do fear for her,  
Knowing her very over-sensitive.  
The blight that cannot harm the knotted oak  
Will wither the frail flow'ret in a trice.  
How do I miss her sweet society !  
And lacking thus the joy of her sweet presence  
Why I must feed on reminiscences.  
I do remember when I saw her first,  
And knew her for my mother's sister's child,  
My own sweet coz :—it was upon this wise  
I went to Rome—'tis now some five years gone—  
To get acquaint with my good kinsfolk there,  
And I came sudden on her i' the street,  
And saw her there an aged man relieve  
In rags and tatters thinly habited !  
With tear-fill'd eyes and very plaintive face  
She listened to the story of his woes,  
Then sigh'd for that she was not rich eno'  
To make him rich for all his days to come.

Smit with her beauty and her modest port  
I mutely stood and gazed, which when she saw,  
Oh! she did blush enchantingly to see  
Her pious act detected, and anon,  
In exquisite confusion slunk away!  
My sword! I thought in all my life before  
I ne'er had seen such grace and modesty!  
And now to draw sword 'gainst her kith and kin,  
Her country, all she duly doth hold dear—  
Oh! 'tis a very sorry business!  
But soft! I'll not the evil time forestall:—  
Days three and thirty yet must come about  
Ere we do take the field and fight it out:  
Oh! that the meanwhile haply may disclose,  
To end the feud, some other means than blows!

| *Exit*

END OF ACT I.

## ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Room.**Enter HORATIA.*

*Horatia.* Ten times hath golden Phœbus gone his rounds  
Since Rome's embattled front march'd forth to wage  
With Alba dire war :—Oh ! that the gods  
Would the obstructive cause eternalize  
That doth retard the battle ! Why, oh, why  
Should Rome and Alba come to cruel blows ?  
Alas ! what self-idolaters we are,  
How frail, how vile, and conscience-violative !  
And yet how highly think we of ourselves !  
Oh ! evil doth pollute our every thought,  
Affection, inclination, purpose, aim !  
E'en Mysis and poor Bubo,—they are kind,  
Honest, good-natur'd,—yet how oft in them  
Have odious principles reveal'd themselves.  
And Metius too : I love him—but if I  
Did love him not, how many things in him  
Would in my heart aversion generate !  
But selfishness, that is our being's bane.  
Why else should Rome and Alba go to war ?  
Both have enough, yet both do covet more ;  
And i' th' attempt at more do risk th' enough.  
Oh ! what a gambler's man ; and what a game  
Of oughts and crosses doth he make of life !  
To-day he risks his much to compass more ;  
And if successful, doth upon the morrow,  
With equal ardour, his augmented store  
Upon the self-same jeopardies suspend ;  
Double or quits, his motto ever seems.  
What is this thirsty principle within,  
That nothing earthly seems to satisfy ?  
Multiply all we have ten thousand fold,  
And still it craves—and craves—and craves again !  
It craves to-day—to-morrow—and next day ;  
It craves in youth—in riper years—in age !  
What is the cause ? Is its appropriate food  
Not to be found on earth, but somewhere else :  
Not in the creature to be realized ?  
Methinks it must be so : for the affections—  
(The love of parent—kindred—lover—child,)  
Those seeming purest sources of delight,—

E'en these not always i' their exercise  
Quite satisfy the soul : there's still a void,  
E'en let what we call evils come not nigh.  
Ah me ! I would that Bubo had return'd ;  
I have dispatch'd him to the hostile camp  
To seek my cousin out, and learn how he  
Fareth in this most sad extremity.  
Why tarrieth Mysis ; I'll go seek for her :  
What, Mysis ! wench, where art thou ; Mysis ! ho !  
[Exit calling.

## SCENE II.—In the Roman Camps.

*Enter the HORATII.*

*Marcus.* Aye, marry : of this do-nothing leisure I am right heartily sick. Ten times hath the sun wished us good night at his setting, since our embattled front first halted here, and for the matter o' the service done, we might as usefully have stayed at home.

*Hostus.* I had thought that Alba would something less tardily have marched her out and come to fisticuffs, having been so prodigal of her menaces.

*Caius.* Alba's a dog, brother Hostus, would soon bite did his chain let him ; but his wary master, the king Cluilius, doth keep him tied up from the fray, hoping our ardour will erewhile draw us forth from our vantage ground, to fight him where we shall have fewer vantages at our back.

*Marcus.* Nay, then, 'tis like our holidays shall last somewhat longer, for the king, though no lover of rusty sloth, will not be the first to stir, our position being so worthy. Soft, by the way, have any of ye seen the Curiatii, since first we pitched camp here-away ?

*Hostus.* Not e'en their shadows have been visible in any quarter o' the opponent camp, and I have more than once been straining eyes to catch a glimpse of 'em.

*Marcus.* Marry, they had grown somewhat sulky of late ! I doubt they did never forgive us our victory i' the last wrestling. Had our two states not come to blows, methinks we and they had done so ere long, but that they did less seek our company of late.

*Hostus.* I wonder how read they our late defiance ?

*Marcus.* Oh ! an' it came to cousin Metius, methinks his scornful nose did strait upturn, while, quoth he, with down-drawn mouth, solemn face, and most lordly gesture,—“ Put it aside, it is a foolish vaunt.”

*Caius.* Hang him ! he was ever wont to misplease us with his lordliness ! I would desire nothing better than to encounter him i' the thick o' the battle, to try which were the better man in a mortal bout.

*Hostus.* I know not, brothers ! if I do therein err, but oftentimes hath the suspicion cross'd me, Metius did love our sister !

*Marcus.* Out on thee, Hostus ! art beside thyself ? Beshrew me, but 'tis well the scornful gentleman is out o' hearing, or he methinks would cite you to account for your saying. What ! the philosophic Metius ! the grave, the cynical, the oracular Metius ! that could ne'er condescend to be like his mates in anything ; stoop him to love a little timid wench ! Why his affections, man, stood pre-engaged !

*Hostus.* How so ?—to whom ?

*Marcus.* Unto himself : of whom he was enamour'd overmuch. Pah ! love Horatia ! it were full as like the haughty lion would go whining and wooing unto some tim'rous hind.

*Hostus.* Yet for all that my thought doth hold its ground.

*Marcus.* Hostus ! thou hast for once o'ershot the targe.

*Caius.* Aye ; and is it like, think ye, that so mild, timid and gentle a wench as Horatia, could ever have come to love so proud, imperious, and o'erbearing a being as this cousin of ours, who would scarce ever have let her call her soul her own ? Pish ! thou hast in such matters, Hostus, but a shallow wit.

*Hostus.* Well, 'tis perhaps as thou sayest. Come, shall we go the rounds again ?

*Marcus.* Aye, have with ye ; 'tis the only amusement is left us in this season of musty inaction ;

*Mars !* dost thou sleep ? Awake ! nor let we pray,  
This rusty sloth endure another day. [Exeunt.]

SCENE III.—*In the rear of the Alban Camps.*

METIUS CURIATIUS *solus.*

*Metius.* Here stand I cased in mine old warlike gear,  
My sword at side, mine helmet on my head,  
The rousing tools and furniture of war  
Staring me i' the face ; while close at hand,  
Stands p'raps the very tug of war itself,—  
Yet I of martial mood am clean bereft !—  
Why in times past, of these incentives half  
Would on the instant kindle me to flame.  
Strange transformation !—good now ; what's the cause ?  
Love ! tender love :—a most unwarlike word !  
A very scurvy, insufficient plea :—  
“ I cannot do mine office i' the wars,  
“ Nor as a lusty soldier bear myself,  
“ Keeping unfractur'd my fair reputation,  
“ Because I love a little maid at Rome.”—  
Pah ! fie ! for shame !—it is a naughty plea.  
E'en such an one  
As baby-boys that never handl'd sword,  
Or startled at the trumpet's martial sound,

Would to their grand-dams urge, as the excuse  
For sleepless nights, pale cheeks, and frequent sighs.  
Then, Metius Curiatius ! honest friend !—  
Sure to thine own conviction thou 'lt defer ;  
Be thine own-self again ; discard thy love ;  
And lustily demean ye i' the fight ?—  
No, marry ! 'tis a thing impossible :  
It were as easy to unmake myself,  
As to unlove Horatia, though to love her  
Thus in a manner puts me to the blush,—  
Hist !—was not that a footfall ?—Who goes there ?

*Enter BUBO, looking about.*

*Bubo.* Good sir ; I did desire to have speech with one Metius Curiatius the Alban.

*Metius.* Well : I am he.

*Bubo.* Nay ! Is't so in sooth ? Art thou in very deed he ? Nay, now I look again thou art he of a verity. I do remember thee well, Sir, what time thou and thy brothers were wont in the exercises, to mix with our Roman youth in the plain beside the Tiber.

*Metius.* No more o' that, my friend ! What is thy business ? Art thou a Roman ?

*Bubo.* Marry ! that am I, Sir ; and I serve Horatius thy kinsman.

*Metius.* Aye ! how fares thy master and his house ?—Well ? Are they well ? All well ?—He had a daughter, if I mind aright :—Is she well ?

*Bubo.* Why truly, Sir, to speak plainly, I am come hither to thee at her bidding :—(no, not at her bidding, I lie)—but I am come for her pleasure, as knowing her will to be that I should come.

*Metius.* Aye ? Art in her confidence ? Hath she then told thee ; that is—dost know ;—I would say—

*Bubo.* Sir, thou would'st say, do I know thy true case :—marry, Sir, that do I : on the which account it is in part that I have been moved to seek thee in the enemy's country ; of the perils of which seeking as aforesaid, my love sayeth nothing,—for Sir, I am, as a man may say, in the same case myself, and do therefore profess sympathy with all true lovers :—Do thou never fear, Sir, that thy secret is as safe in my keeping as in thine own.

*Metius.* No more ;—I will believe thee worthy o' thy trust ;—when saw'st thy lady last ?

*Bubo.* Why, Sir, yesternight.

*Metius.* And was she well ?

*Bubo.* Why, not altogether as one would say, well.

*Metius.* How look'd she ?—wanly ?



*Bubo.* Why, Sir ; to say truth, she was somewhat o' the palest ; for pining doth ever whiten the complexion.

*Metius.* Is she thinner than she used to be ?

*Bubo.* Well, Sir ; to say she hath lost flesh, is to speak no lies.

*Metius.* Aye ! I understand—I know her well—I know her frame, her tender heart, her temper, feelings, all ;—the thing will kill her :—Curses upon the broil !—but, soft, I had forgot—her message !—mine honest friend ! what said she ?—tell me her speech, 'beseech ye.

*Bubo.* Why, truly, Sir ; to say truth, I have brought thee no message, for the matter did fall out on this wise :—Thou must know, Sir ; my mistress, being minded to let thee hear of her, sat me her down and writ thee a letter ; but when she had writ it, she thought it was not modest, and so she tore it :—then she bethought her again, and, quoth she, “ he is my cousin as well as my lover,” and then she writ it again ;—but when she had writ it again, she then thought it treasonous, for that thou wer't her country's enemy ; so then she tore it again, and fell a-weeping :—well, then she writ it a third time :—but this time she thought it both treasonous and immodest, and so she tore it again and wept outright.

*Metius.* Alas ! poor soul !

*Bubo.* Well, then she bethought her again ; and, quoth she, “ though I may not write to him, nor send him sweet tokens, there is no harm that I should hear of him : so, honest Bubo,” saith she, (but she ceased not weeping, and her voice did tremble a trifle or so) “ do thou get thee to their camps, and seek out my cousin, and inquire of his welfare, and take good observance of him, that thou mayst tell me of his looks, (whether he looketh as one that grieveth and hath sorrow at heart), and of all his words too, when thou comest back to me ; but thou wilt not tell him I did bid thee seek him, nor say aught of what thou hast seen in me ; for he might think it not maidenly.”—Aye ! but whither away ?—what am I at !—marry, come up !—art thou beside thyself, Bubo ? Why, thou false loon !—thou bungling messenger !—thou breaker of faith ! What hath ailed thee to let thy tongue tattle thus ?

*Metius.* Why chidest thou thyself ? Go on with thy sweet story, honest Bubo ! I say on.

*Bubo.* Nay, Sir ; but I have carried myself very scurvily in this matter. I was bid to tell thee nothing of the matter that I have yet but now told thee of :—I was bid to say nothing of my lady, but to inquire all of thee—and, behold, I have told thee all of my lady, and asked nothing of thyself. Marry ! in this I have sorely miscarried.

*Metius.* I do forgive thee from my very soul ;—tell it me o'er again.

*Bubo.* Sir ; I thank thee for thy forgiveness ; but there be one

shall not forgive me so readily, I doubt not. A murrain on my tattling tongue !

*Metius.* Thy lady will not chide thee.—

*Bubo.* No ; but mistress Mysis will chide me : which, under your favour, I shall most mind of the two ; for every man, Sir, to his own mistress :—marry ! I shall have nothing but pouting 'till the next new moon, and shall be put on short commons in kisses the while.

*Metius.* Thy sweetheart shall not know it.

*Bubo.* Nay, Sir, it's not so easy to keep anything from one's sweetheart :—I have noted that women have a most marvellous and magical knack of making their lovers reveal their peccadilloes :—They charm 'em out of us with endearments and then avenge 'em with poutings :—I conceive that I've put my foot in it.

*Metius.* I fear me that she pineth—I fear me that she pineth :—Oh ! that I had these war-mongering kings to wreak my will on : I would nothing better desire than to have the twain o' 'em at my sword's point, that I might hurl them to the shades ! Mine honest friend !—I do greatly thank thee for thy goodness in coming hither :—Art bound to return on the instant ?

*Bubo.* Nay, Sir ; but I can tarry a while longer yet.

*Metius.* Do it of thy goodness, and I'll provide thee a letter for thy lady, of the which I doubt not thou wilt be a trusty bearer :—I cannot on the instant commission thee, being fain to see what a few hours may bring forth.—Thou can'st tarry about the camps.

*Bubo.* Aye ! marry, that will I, Sir—though the longer I tarry the more risk I run ; and I be one of those that count enough to be as good as a feast for that matter.

*Metius.* There shall nothing harm thee :—An' any question thee, do thou lay claim to mine acquaintance, it shall amply serve thy turn ;—I'd like to see even King Cluilius lay so much as a finger on thee whiles thou art retainer of mine.

*Bubo.* Then will I abide thy leisure ; but, good master Curiatius, in that same letter thou speakest of, thou 'lt be good eno' to say nought o' my tattling :—

*Metius.* Fear not ;—I will care that thou be not compromised.  
[Exit BUBO.]

Why, what a loving, lovely wench is this,  
And I but now did inly slight her love,—  
Did blush to own unto myself, that I  
Was by her love subdued thoroughly !  
S'death !—I could heartily myself chastise,  
That I could prate so coldly of the maid,  
Though it was done in my un-public speech !—  
Oh !—what a hive of contrarieties,  
A hotchpot of discordant yeas and nays,  
Is this poor heart o' mine !—  
Thus love and pride by turns my bosom swell,  
And neither can the other clean expel !

Ha!—who comes here? my brother Cœlius!—  
Marry, I well could spare his company.

*Enter Cœlius CURIATIUS.*

*Cœlius.* What dost thou here, good brother?

*Metius.* As little ill as the most harmless soul  
That breathes the air this minute.

*Cœlius.* But how can'st skulk in nooks and corners thus,  
Turning thy back on martial exercises?

*Metius.* I am in arms;—and when the trumpet sounds  
To bid us human mastiffs to fall on,  
'Tis very like I shall as duteously  
Hie to the slaughter, as my fellow-dogs.

*Cœlius.* Now, by the shield o' Mars what is't ye mean?

*Metius.* Nor more nor less than my words intimate.

*Cœlius.* Thy words, methinks, do speak thee void of heart  
For what this great occasion may involve.

*Metius.* Then are my words no liars, Cœlius.  
I and th' occasion are at loggerheads:—  
And never thing did I so much lament,  
As that the mongers that have bred this broil,  
Had not been in their graves, ere they had done 't.

*Cœlius.* Art thou my brother?

*Metius.* An' thou'rt not a changeling:—

*Cœlius.* Then do I blush to know my brotherhood:—  
Deem'st thou this mood befits a Curiatius?—  
Pah!—out upon it;—bid thy valour rouse:—

*Metius.* Valour!—a fig!—art thou so valorous?  
Art sure thy valour is no counterfeit?  
Now, mercy on us! what self-cheats we are,  
What gulls and dupes unto our own impostures!  
Nay, then, that story's true that I have heard,—  
Than in self-knowledge, there is science none  
Wherein poor erring man's a greater dunce:—  
And perhaps it is not very marvellous,  
Seeing that, in such study and tuition,  
He is the tutor and the pupil too.

Alack!—so thou dost count thee valorous?

*Cœlius.* Metius!—have a care,—  
I'll not be flouted;—by the gods! I'll not,

*Metius.* Pray you,—good brother!—do not chide with me:—  
Thou wer't the first, methinks, to play at taunts;  
I do not count thee, i' the genuine ore  
Of courage true, a greater pauper than  
Are half thy fellows else;—

*Cœlius.* Dost thou not blush to play the cynic thus;  
And slander thy brave fellows, who for love  
Of their dear country, ready stand to give  
Their lives into the air i' the mortal strife?

*Metius.* Do they, indeed ! marry !—I doubt it much :—  
I do suspect there's scarce a man amongst ye,  
'Mong all the swashing bawcocks o' the camp,  
Who seem so ready to depart this life,  
(When glory doth his gew-gaws dangle out)—  
And get their souls turn'd out of house and home,  
Taking the chance of what the world to come  
Hath in provision for its visitors,—  
But harboureth a credence undiscern'd—  
(That yet of 's daring is the secret source)  
That death shall skip him in his dispensations,  
Though he do cut the throats of all beside ;—  
And were he certified the morrow's sun  
Would see him eas'd of life, would straitly find  
His valiant stomach something out o' tune ;  
And his brave patriotic notions shrunk  
To scant proportions.

*Caelius.* Is it to varnish o'er thine own defaults  
And lack of heart, thou pratest on this wise ?  
Faugh !—how can'st do it ?—

*Metius.* An' thou dost put me to the proof, I'll tell thee :—  
Will your false valour with the true compare,  
And preach to thee of their variety.—  
True valour's calm, wise, and deliberate ;—  
It is no bully hectoring to and fro,  
And sweating with factitious, fussy, zeal.  
True valour's arm is longer than his tongue,  
And certifies by deeds, not words, his worth :—  
But your false valour's very garrulous,  
And trumpet's his own praises to the world.  
True valour keeps his sword within its sheath  
As long as may be ; when necessity  
Enjoins its usance, then his blade is seen  
I' the fore-front of hottest battle flashing :—  
But your false valour's ever on the itch,  
With or without a cause, to be at work  
In shedding blood, throat-cutting, and the like.  
True valour careth to have ample cause,  
Ere he do use the physic o' the sword ;  
False valour is a mastiff that will fight  
Whether his bone be took away or no.  
True valour is not blind unto the risk,  
The cost and jeopardy that he incurs ;—  
But your false valour's no arithmetician,  
And of the danger three-fourths overlooks ;—  
'Tis but a hare-brain'd swasher, madly braving  
Unweighed danger, and unreckon'd risk.  
Thus consciously the true doth meet his death :  
The false but runs upon it unawares.

True valour flinches not when at his work ;  
 But his undaunted front he doth derive  
 From fix'd conviction he's at duty's post ;  
 False valour is a drunken roysterer,  
 That owes his bastard courage, i' the main,  
 Unto the fumes and fluster of excitement,  
 Which is as much an inebriety,  
 As that which leads the drunkard in his cups,  
 To beard ten times his match.—

True valour weeps over the woes of war,  
 (Achieves the end, but sorrows o'er the means).  
 Your false will prosecute his brave exploits,  
 Without a sigh, cost others what it may.  
 True valour fights for others, not himself ;  
 False valour is a scurvy hireling,  
 That fights to please himself, and to attain  
 Pers'nal reputation and renown.  
 Thus fights the one against no obstacles  
 That do the other in his course impede ;  
 So that, in fine, the true the false excels,  
 As he doth more that swims against the stream,  
 Than he that's by it headlong forc'd away !—

*Caelius.* By my good sword !—a learned homily.  
 Gods !—dost thou call thyself a soldier, Metius ?  
 I charge thee rouse and be a man again :  
 What would our Roman cousins say to this,  
 The haughty, braggart, vain Horatii,  
 That cannot let us bide a day unchaf'd  
 By some proud message of insulting tune ?  
 Why, young Horatia,——

*Metius.* Aye !—and what of her ?—

*Caelius.* Why, wherefore leap thy words from out thy mouth,  
 Like wolves from out a jungle—but because  
 I nam'd the girl ?—Oh ! soft, I had forgot ;—  
 Of old thou wer't her champion,—then in sooth,  
 I'll nothing dare to urge in her dispraise.  
 For Metius,—thou did'st aye so poorly brook  
 To have thy judgment differ'd from in aught,  
 That had it pleas'd thee, in a fit of whim,  
 To say yon sun was like a Lictor's rod,  
 'Fore Mars ! I think thou would'st have smote the man  
 That gainsay'd thine assertion !——

*Metius.* Pah !—who's prater now ?—

*Caelius.* Nay, chafe not :—we both will play at jeers.  
 Look not so frowningly, my peevish brother !—  
 For an' thou lik'st it, I will laud the maid,  
 And say she is a proper worthy wench ;  
 Would be a god-send to some honest soul,  
 Mind'd to stay at home, and peacefully

At his wife's apron-string drawl out his days ;  
 Picking her 'kerchief up, if that it fell ;  
 At her heels lagging wheresoe'er she went ;  
 Sweating with apprehension dutiful,  
 And right uxorious anxiety,  
 An' she but had the tooth-ache :—Oh ! for such,  
 She were, methinks, a treasure.—Nay ! 'fore Mars !  
 As thou so much hast doff'd the soldier, Metius !  
 She'd aptly wive thyself,—but that she is  
 A foeman's daughter !

*Metius.* Cœlius ! thou ever had'st a busy tongue  
 O'ermuch addicted to disparagement,  
 Of those that were not on thine own side rang'd :  
 For the Horatii,—they are men as brave  
 As any souls in Alba :—they can prate,—  
 But so likewise can many 'mongst ourselves ;  
 Nor need I journey very far from hence,  
 To pick ye such an one ;—for the young maid,  
 Of whom thou hast so scurrilously spoke ;  
 (Though I no woman's hero count myself)  
 Yet if again thou with uncourtly speech,  
 Lewd and low ribaldry, dost speak of her,—  
 By all the thunderbolts of Jupiter !  
 I'll slit thy tongue for its ill-manner'dness.

*Cœlius.* Ye gods ! dost know to whom thou speakest, Metius ?

*Metius.* To a vain babblers, craving chastisement.

*Cœlius.* By all the gods !—but this I will not brook.

[*Draws his sword.*]

*Enter QUINTUS CURTIATUS*

*Quintus.* How now !—how now !—why what's a doing here ?  
 Black looks ! high words ! drawn swords to boot !—'fore Mars !  
 Why what's the matter ?—

*Metius.* Cœlius ! I did forget thou wer't my brother,—  
 But in thy loose and most uncourteous speech,  
 Thou wer't so much unlike thy father's son,  
 There was naught present, to remind me of  
 The womb from whence thou camest :—

*Cœlius.* And let me tell thee, Metius ! thou wer't aye,  
 To other folk somewhat o'er arrogant,  
 And scornful in thine 'haviour, mien, and speech,  
 As though thine equal were past finding out :  
 Thou wer't the first to slander and disparage.—

*Quintus.* Nay,—this is to foment your strife anew :  
 Come keep the peace as brothers :—What on earth  
 Hath wrought ye up to this unseemly pitch ?  
 Why I do come to tell ye gallant news.  
 Cluilius is no more ;—the Counsellors

Are meeting, a Dictator to elect :

We fight to-morrow !

*Metius.* How ?—to-morrow ?

*Quintus.* Aye !

*Cœlius.* The gods be praised for 't :—I'll away, and learn  
More of this goodly matter.

*Metius.* And we do fight to-morrow ?—That is so ?

*Quintus.* Of that, they say, there's not a jot of doubt.

*Metius.* Cœlius ! A word or so before we part :

I do repent me of my foolish spleen,  
And yet more foolish threat.—'Pray you, your hand :—  
From boyhood we have dwelt in amity,  
And brotherly accord ; in battles many  
With neighb'ring states that trod upon our rights,  
Abreast have fought, and, in conjunction, earn'd  
A glowing reputation ; so that men  
Speak of us in the total and the sum  
As those brave men, " the Curiatii."  
Then let us not between ourselves permit  
A foolish feud to work a severance :—  
Let's end, as we began, as loving brothers.  
To-morrow, for the first time in our lives—  
(If what now Quintus states doth prove a truth)  
We in the field meet Rome ; and well we know  
From what the battle's issue shall entail  
Upon the losing side—'twill be tough work ;  
The reaper Death, perchance shall gather in  
More than an av'rage harvest ; and, for'smuch  
As we have ever been accustomed  
To show ourselves where danger busiest wrought,  
'Tis very like or some or all of us  
Shall be his chattels ere to-morrow night.  
This being so, our loves let's ratify ;  
That we may know, if in death's grasp embrac'd,  
We left no foolish rupture unrepair'd,  
But haply with each other died at peace.

*Cœlius.* Mine ill-will, Metius ! hath evaporated  
And we are friends :—So, farewell for this present ;  
Anon, I will return ; but now I go  
To learn if Quintus' tale be so or no !

*Quintus.* I'll have with ye ; for I would further learn,  
How matters go. Metius ! awhile adieu. [Exit.

*Manet METIUS.*

*Metius.* So for a while, Cœlius, adieu, and Quintus !—  
Ye gods ! how this occasion me befools !  
Why with what face could I with Cœlius chide,  
For thoughts that were mine own, but for a cause,

Unto the which he no way subject is ?  
How could I rail at his keen-whetted stomach,  
When even now I do most enviously,  
His unobstructed appetite begrudge,  
And wish me I could wear the self-same mood.  
Why he and I herein should be as like  
As star to star, but that a Roman maid  
Hath made me an apostate for a while.  
Yea ; I should be the very thing I rail at,  
Did but prevention stand out o' the way ;  
Then sure to rail because I may not boast me  
The thing whereat I rail's, a scurvy trick !  
And yet how uniform the practice is  
When we are out at elbows with ourselves,  
Straightway with all else to be petulant,  
And to upbraid in other folk the faults  
That of our own are but the duplicates,  
Thus round a corner hitting at ourselves !—  
Ah me ! I'm sorely self-dissatisfied ;—  
Being subject to a cause that may not seem  
The justifier of its own effect ;  
Nay, straightway would a jest-book make of me  
To the whole camp, were it promulgated.  
But truce to these unfruitful questionings !  
We're now to buckle to, and fight it out :  
What shall I do ?—how act ?—how shape my course ?  
Clear 'tis I may not this my love discard ;  
Nor may I play the truant from the fight.  
Then must I compromise between the two.  
Must love, yet fight 'gainst the best interests  
She prizes whom I love ;—but I must go ;  
So far less grievously, that to stay away  
Could not arrest the issue of the fight.  
And i' the general and common crush—  
The pell-mell intermixture o' the ranks—  
I will at least avoid th' Horatii ;  
For or that they by me, or I by them,  
Should catch our deaths were sure unsuitable !  
No,—I will find me foes some-other-where.  
And so will I demean me i' the field,  
That if to Alba Rome be doomed to yield,  
Mine high desert shall buy me ample power,  
To serve my Roman kin i' their evil hour.  
Thus into ill which I cannot repress,  
I'll thrust some good to make the mischief less.

[Exit.]



SCENE IV.—*In the Roman Camps.**Enter hastily two Soldiers.. To them the HORATII.**Marcus.* Whither away so fast, my valiant friends ?

*1st Soldier.* We haste the royal Hostilius to encounter  
 Having important tidings for his ear.  
 A rumour is afoot that King Cluilius,  
 (Whose tardy prosecution of this war,  
 And cautious policy, did much mis-match  
 The hotter spirits of his countrymen)  
 Was in his tent at morning's dawn descried,  
 A pallid form and clean bereft of life.  
 The enemy, as we do stand inform'd,  
 In earnest consultation now are met,  
 Touching the nomination of a head  
 To fill the vacant office of the King ;  
 And as it is of course they'll sort them out  
 A man conformable unto their mood,  
 The chances are, ere we much older grow,  
 Alba and Rome shall in hot battle join.

*Marcus.* My friends ! I wish ye both long life, rare health,  
 True friends and fortunes fair, for these same news !  
 Ye are news-mongers of the rightful stamp :—  
 Speed to the King ; away ! no moment lose. [*Exeunt Soldiers.*]  
 I pray the gods they be not misinform'd,  
 But that, as they avouch, Cluilius' soul  
 Hath found its way into the other world ;  
 Or at the least doth stand securely barr'd  
 From all re-entrance on its former state.  
 Come, brothers ; let's away unto the King.  
 The meanwhile now, methinks, but brief will be,  
 Ere we do doff this irksome apathy. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V.—*Another part of the Roman Camps.**TULLUS HOSTILIUS seated, with Officers, Soldiery, &c.**Tullus.* And know they not the manner of his death ?

*1st Soldier.* As it should seem they do not ; doubtful 'tis  
 Whether or treason did the deed, or fate ;  
 But so it is, Cluilius is no more.

*Tullus.* Most heartily we wish him all good hap  
 In the new climate whereunto he's gone.  
 He was no sorry soldier when it pleas'd him  
 In earnest to fall to ; and for the slowness  
 Wherewith he did this warfare prosecute,  
 It was the best part o' his gen'ralship ;  
 And much bethink I, that his after-comer

Shall his inherited subjects haply lead  
Into dilemmas he did overstep :  
An' they advance on us, (as seemeth like  
From the new stir and bustle i' their camp,)  
They 're beaten men ; we then shall have the best on't.

*Enter an Officer.*

Now, my good friend ! what may your tidings be ?

*Officer.* An embassy from Mettus Fuffetius,  
(That late hath stept into Cluilius' shoes,)

Of royal Tullus doth an audience crave.

*Tullus.* Give them admittance. [*Exit Officer.*] Why, what's  
now afoot ?

*Enter Officer and Ambassadors.*

We greet ye, Sirs ! and do attentive wait,

To know your master's purposes us-ward.

*1st Ambassador.* Mettus Fuffetius, Alba's brave Dictator,

To Tullus sends his soldierly regards :

And prays to be vouchsafed a pers'nal hearing,

Midway between the camps, touching a mode

And project he hath lately hit upon

For the determination of this feud,

At less outlay and sacrifice of life

Than would ensue a conflict general.

*Tullus.* Know ye the colour of his project, Sirs ?

*1st Ambassador.* No furtherwise than we have now set forth.

With what reply shall we go furnished back ?

*Tullus.* Commend us to your master courteously.

And say to him that in an hour hence,

If it so please him, we'll the meeting give,

Upon the plain that 'twixt us intervenes,

By moderate retinue accompanied ;

And so farewell :—

[*Exeunt Ambassadors.*

Methinks, of purpose this doth something smack,

With our own self alone to try a bout ;

Making a battle's consequence depend

On combat single. We shall think of it ;

However as it may so let that be,

To hear him out can do no injury.

[*Flourish, Exeunt.*

## ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Plain between the Roman and Alban Camps.*

*Enter at one side, TULLUS HOSTILIUS, the HORATII, elder HORATIUS, Roman Officers and Soldiery. On the other, METTUS FUFFETIUS, the CURIATII, Alban Forces, &c.*

*Tullus.* Noble Fuffetius ! here stand we of Rome,  
The tenor and particular drift to learn  
Of that same project late by thee devised  
For the adjustment of this lengthy strife,  
Without pitch'd battle's intervention.

*Fuffetius.* Valiant Hostilius ! we shall speak our mind  
In honest plainness and unvarnish'd speech.  
We twain profess that we are here in arms,—  
(Warlike encounter sternly purposing),  
Upon the score of wrongs reciprocal ;  
Whereas an' we but speak like honest men,  
Nor cloak the truth,—thus rather stands the case :—  
Rome hath an itching to be Alba's lord,  
And (with inclining thereto parallel,)  
Alba doth yearn to lord it over Rome :  
And let us grant that neither o' the twain,  
Will from his earnest purpose budge an inch.  
Be then, or this or that the moving cause,  
Clear 'tis that we must somehow fight it out :  
Wherefore mine offer hath alone regard,  
Unto the method of arbitrement.  
But this, as by us shaped, being something new,  
And by no prior precedent commended,  
We shall lay out the reasons that have mov'd us  
To urge resort thereto. Know therefore, Tullus !  
That on authority of trusty sort,  
We stand advis'd that certain neighb'ring states,—  
(Whereof the Fidenates make them one ;  
The Veientes going hand-in-hand  
I' the design—with them how many more  
Are minded to embark them i' the plot,  
Hath yet to be smelt out when leisure serves.)  
Have leagu'd themselves in a confed'racy,  
To filch the profits of our rencontre,  
And turn our quarrel to their own account ;  
Having now armies ready at a word,  
To march them out and on our forces fall,

When spent and feebled by the tug of war.

*Tullus.* 'Fore all the gods!—this squares with our own news,  
In so far as affects the Fidenates.

*Fuffetius.* Good! therein nowise 'minish'd is the proof  
That some such project is in embryo,  
The which to thwart should seem but politic;  
For open-eyedly to drop ourselves  
Into the trap laid by these crafty states,  
Would show us not sagacious over-much.  
Yet, forasmuch as needful 'tis withal,  
We should our feud protracted terminate,  
(Which may not be effected by the mean,  
Of pell-mell onset, as we now have shown),  
We do propose to rest a battle's weight,  
Full consequence, and most entire issue,  
On single combat; it being cared to have  
Equality between us twain ensured.

*Metius. (aside.)* Now heaven dispose the Roman King t' assent,  
So shall I be disburthen'd of one half  
The sharp discomforts this foul feud entails.

*Fuffetius.* Are we so far like-minded, brave Hostilius?

*Tullus.* Yea, verily; so far so good. But whom  
Dost thou propose shall be the combatants?  
Dost mean, bold Alban, (without more ado,)  
To challenge us of Rome to single fight?

*Metius. (aside.)* Yea, as of course; and very meet it be  
That they whose feud it is, the fighting take  
On their own shoulders:—the great gods be prais'd  
The thing hath took this turn!

*Fuffetius.* Royal Roman! at another time, perchance,  
We should not be o'er slack to catch thine hint  
And cross swords with ye; but as matters stand,  
We hold it meet ourselves should stand aloof.

*Metius. (aside.)* Not fight thyself?—Marry! a skilful trick,  
To keep thine own skin whole at other's cost!—  
Then whom, in Jove's name, will he nominate?

*Fuffetius.* No, brave Hostilius; we do read it writ,  
(In the strange circumstance we now adduce)  
The gods themselves have found us combatants,  
Whom to supplant, or by ourselves or others,  
Of their own very palpable provision  
Were plain neglect and flatly impious.  
We here in Alba have three gallant youths,  
(Twin-born of one brave sire, and esteem'd  
Of dauntless mettle and stout-heartedness.)

*Metius. (aside.)* How now?—what's this?—how now?—what's  
coming now?  
Gods! what a thought did lighten through my soul!

*Fuffetius.* 'Eclept 'mongst us the Curiatii,—

*Metius. (aside.)* My startled blood hath halted in its flow,  
And I do breathe but thickly ;—throbbing heart !  
Be still, I say, be still.

*Fuffetius.* Unto whose swords  
We are content to trust our liberties,  
And all that we of weighty worth esteem.  
And wherefore ? but because we do discern  
The finger of the gods who reign above,  
Pointing us to this choice :—You have in Rome,  
(And never yet did happen thing so strange,  
Equality so wondrous), three brave souls,  
(Likewise descended from a common womb)  
Who like our own, are men of fair renown,  
Apt parts, and qualities appropriate,  
To take on them the championship for Rome,  
(Called by their fellows, the Horatii),  
Whom thou may'st match 'gainst ours.

*Metius. (aside.)* Ah ! Is it so ? Is that indeed thy plot ?  
Then, gods ! have mercy on Horatia.  
An' this must be, her days are numbered :—  
Fate ! thou hast done thy worst ; thy blackest skill  
Could not out-horror this :—  
Would Death had been before his time with me,  
Since I have liv'd for this.

*Fuffetius.* Tullus ! we pause to know, if on these men  
Thou art content to stake the fate of Rome ?

*Tullus.* By gallant Mars ! the proffer likes us well.  
Your leash of heroes have consented to 't ?

*Fuffetius.* It were a wasteful ceremony, King !  
Their antecedent sanction to solicit ;  
Too well their fervent stomachs do we know,  
To doubt they 'll eager jump to grasp the office.

*Metius. (aside.)* Ha ! say'st thou so ? By all the gods above,  
I'd further jump to hurl thee to the shades !

*Tullus.* Stands old Horatius anywhere at hand ?

*Elder HORATIUS advances.*

Now, my old friend, this matter thou hast heard :  
What to Fuffetius' proffer sayest thou ?

*Horatius.* King Tullus ! my brave lads are nigh at hand,  
I' their own persons to negotiate  
The noble bargain :—pray you, ask themselves ;  
For I would not upon their wills impose  
A pressure right or left :—wilt bid them forth ?

*Tullus.* Brave sons of brave Horatius,—stand ye forth,  
Gallant renewals of your sire's youth !  
And let us hereupon your minds receive :—

*The HORATHI advance.*

Now, Sirs, what say ye ? an' ye like the work,

By all the gods ! we shall not grudge to trust ye  
With all we care to keep from detriment.

*Marcus.* But feebly can our words our souls express,  
Which with a red-hot eagerness do burn,  
Such honourable trust to execute.  
With Rome's consent, we will her champions be ;  
And if the gods permit, the strife will end  
To her rich gain, or with our lives defray  
The failure's forfeit.

*Metius. (aside.)* Brag on, brag on ; for I am cowed indeed  
The merest boy might smite me i' the face.

*Tullus.* Well said, brave sirs ;—noble Fuffetius !  
'Tis then agreed, that fully to estop  
The wholesale slaughter of the gallant bands  
Now here in arms, we on the trusty swords  
Of these right gallant and well-sorted threes,  
Do stake the freedom of the one of us.  
If to the Roman swords success incline,  
Alba to Rome is thenceforth tributary—  
If otherwise it chance, of th' Alban power  
Rome for the future shall the subject be.  
We do adjudge that to the gods we owe't,  
That this compacter warfare's open to us ;  
And that each side can furnish forth its men,  
In number, fame, and prowess so alike,  
That not a feather's weight of variance lies  
Betwixt the one and th' other.

*Fuffetius.* As we have said it is a wondrous match,  
That from design of the immortal gods  
Alone could have befallen.—T'oust delay,  
We for the fray the morrow nominate.  
And let meanwhile efficient lists be made.  
Brave Curiatii ! then on your swords  
We stake the fate and liberties of Alba.

[*Acclamations.*]

*Caelius.* Glad we assume the trust, and hope to quit us  
Unto the profit of our countrymen. [Acclamations renewed.]

*Tullus.* As upon these doth Alba, so on thee,  
Gallant Horatii ! Rome doth rest her hopes ;  
Nor looks to be a loser by her faith.

*Horatii.* We by our deeds, not by our words, would prove  
The wisdom of her choice.

[*Renewed shouts.*]

*Tullus.* A brief reply enough ;—yet so methinks  
It doth comprise all the occasion's due.

[*Converses apart with FUFFETIUS.*]

*Horatii.* Cousins of Alba !—on the morrow look  
For bloody demonstration that old Rome  
Breeds better soldiers than ye bargain for.

*Quintus.* Cousins of Rome !—let brave to-morrow shew,  
An' we than ye are better men or no.

*The Roman soldiery, with the elder HORATIUS, gather round the HORATII, exhorting and congratulating them. The Alban soldiery do the like with CÆLIUS and QUINTUS CURIATIUS, METIUS CURIATIUS having walk'd aside.*

*Metius.* Butcher Horatia's brothers ?—Cut their throats ?—  
 Shed their life's blood in brutal competition ?—  
 I could as leave dash out my father's brains ;  
 Trample my mother's grave ;—do anything—  
 The blackest instance of performable crime—  
 As easily as this :—What's to be done ?  
 I am myself scarce tough eno' to bear it—  
 Then what shall she do ?—They above best know :  
 A broken heart or a dethroned reason,  
 Methinks will be the end :—  
 Heaven help her ! She will never wear grey hairs.  
 What's to be done ?—Shall I avow the truth ?  
 And tell these project-mongers I'll not fight,  
 That I'll not rack the soul of that sweet wench,  
 That's worth a host of such foul gambling knaves !  
 Nay, soft awhile !—  
 There's time to pause :—I'll chew upon the thing :—  
 Ha !—a good thought !—yea,—so—I'll see herself,  
 And reason it with her :—so that will do.  
 Where's Bubo ?—I must seek him out at once.

*Tullus. (breaking off.)* Good !—on the morrow be the thing  
 essay'd,  
 And we will then, with ceremony due,  
 And rites accustom'd, verify the plan :—  
 Yea, on the morrow shall they fight it out.  
 And let the day, by virtue of the deed,  
 All its forerunners in repute exceed.

*[Flourish, acclamations, Exeunt.]*

SCENE II.—*In the rear of the Alban Camps.*

*Enter METIUS CURIATIUS.*

*Metius.* I shall go mad :—I know not what to do  
 In this most dire, dread extremity.  
 How small a mischief was the prior ill  
 Compared with this huge horror !—She shall die ;  
 For she's no bloody-minded heroine ;  
 No lover of heroic butcheries.  
 Pah !—from my soul, I loathe these heroines :  
 Those unsex'd hags, the Faunas of the day,  
 That gloat on men for martial murderings :  
 And, by their wolfy patronage, incite  
 Our savage souls to yet more fell excess  
 Of bloody doing ! Now, alack ! alack !—

Right certain 'tis there's something wrong in man,  
He is not what he was design'd to be.  
I 'gin to think this fame is guerdon vile,  
A very shameful, worthless perquisite,  
And I'll have done with't.—She shall cast the die.  
Let her but say,—“Now, Cousin! do it not,”—  
And fame and glory! ye may to the winds,  
And go and gather worshippers elsewhere:  
Yea, and this gentle maid and I will seek  
Some quiet nook, where we may dwell alone,  
Out o' the reach of common sympathies;  
And there we'll end our days. Alack! Alack!—  
Hist!—Bubo!—Art thou there?—

*Enter BUBO.*

*Bubo.* Oh! Sir, but this is a most woeful come-about!

*Metius.* Nay, no more o' that, my friend!—we cannot mend it.

*Bubo.* Nay, Sir, but how fares it with thee?

*Metius.* But ill,—but ill,—my friend!—but very ill.

*Bubo.* Oh! Sir, I could almost find in my heart to sit down by the way-side, and cry you like any baby.

*Metius.* Aye, thou'rt an honest soul; were there more of thy metal, and fewer would-be heroes i' the world, it were the better, methinks, for the general good! But no more o' this,—I prithee, hie thee to Rome and deliver this packet to thy lady.

*Bubo.* That will I, Sir—come what come may on't:—I know not well what to say at our parting, Sir!—I did have it at the tip o' my tongue to say,—“The gods bless thee, Sir! and give thee the best on't,”—but that then a something did nudge me and as it were said unto me,—“Bubo, thou art a Roman.”

*Metius.* Aye, I do fathom thy difficulty:—Thou art not the only one, mine honest friend, that in this untoward hap knoweth not well how to be neutral. Give me thy hand—we may not meet again. I do very heartily thank thee for all thy much goodness in coming hither on my errands. I would there might fall to thee many and happy days; and that thy love's course might run something more smoothly than mine hath done. An' we beat your friends, and I survive, I'll do my best to befriend thee, and get thee comfortably cared for. If they beat us, thou wilt not need my help. So, farewell! and tarry not, but make all speed thou canst to Rome. I am ill at ease, and would fain have mine own company only; farewell! [Exit.

*Manet BUBO.*

*Bubo.* Well, they were wont to call him proud, and so forth; but, to my mind, he is the bravest and most loveable gentleman I ever had to do with! Now would I sooner have one of his mould, than twenty of your head-over-heels heroes. By my valour! I could find in my heart to wish me an Alban, but that



I might be on his side. Alas ! alas ! 'tis a very sorrowful business ! I had rather an hundred times we had had a pitched battle, though I had lost my life i' the fray. Poor mistress Horatia ! and poor master Metius ! Odd'so, if I think more on 't, I shall fall a-blubbering. I'll get me home with the letter. [Exit.]

SCENE III.—A Room.

Enter HORATIA and MY SIS.

*Horatia.* No tidings of Bubo, Mysis ?

*Mysis.* No, my lady.

*Horatia.* What, art thou weeping ?

*Mysis.* Yes, my lady.

*Horatia.* What ails thee ? what's amiss ?

*Mysis.* Nay, I cannot help but weep, my lady.

*Horatia.* But tell me thy sorrow, good wench ; peradventure I may comfort thee.

*Mysis.* Why, to be plain with thee, sweet mistress ; I am weeping about Bubo.

*Horatia.* But wherefore, Mysis ? he shall soon come back.

*Mysis.* Nay, 'tis that I am fearful of ; whiles I was so bent on getting him to go of thine errand, I did think of nought else ; but so soon as Bubo had gone on his way, (for sooner or later will self ever get uppermost,) I did 'gin to think what perils he might come across, the which I had not thought on before : and so, my lady, I have bethought me of so many risks, and perils, and dangers, and mischiefs, the which poor Bubo may run against, that I cannot help but weep.

*Horatia.* Nay, believe me, thy lover shall come to no ill : not a hair of his head shall be the worse for his goodness ; he shall safely come back to thee.

*Mysis.* Nay, I know not that, my lady ! though Bubo's no hero, he's no coward ; and if any of those Alban villains should give him saucy speech, though there were a score of 'em, Bubo would have at 'em. I cannot help but weep.

*Horatia.* Nay, but thou 'lt break my heart, an' thou sorrowest thus, Mysis ! believe me, he shall come to no ill : my cousin Metius shall protect him ;—he is of great repute among his countrymen, and were to him as good a guardian as the King himself. I beseech you, take courage.

*Mysis.* Nay, there's comfort in that. I do think the brave gentleman your cousin, would remember that Bubo had put himself in peril on his account, and would therefore stand by him, and see that he came to no hurt : so I'll dry my eyes. Shall I go forth to learn if there be any later news from the camps ?

*Horatia.* Do so, sweet wench, and come back to me anon.

[Exit MY SIS.]

No, my good wench ! that thy lover should come to ill on the

account of mine, would sorely enlarge my distresses ; but I do know him to be thoroughly safe.—

I had a very horrid dream last night,  
 'Pray heaven it bode no evil nigh at hand !  
 I dream't that Rome had beaten Alba's force  
 And home return'd triumphant : at her heels,  
 A captive host, methought, did sullen stalk,  
 'Mongst whom was Metius, weary, worn, and wan.  
 Methought I after saw him i' the Forum,  
 With fetters gyv'd, whilst round about him stood  
 Th' Horatii, mocking him with uncouth taunts.  
 I thought my very heart would crack in twain,  
 To see my noble cousin so abus'd.  
 And when I on my brothers turn'd to look,  
 I thought it was so cowardly, so base,  
 So dastardly, to make such mock at him,  
 That I did stand excus'd from loving them,  
 And for the wish that the untoward strife  
 Contrariwise had ended. And I was  
 In act to spring to where he fetter'd stood,  
 To clasp him to my bosom openly,—  
 (Despite my brothers and the crowd around,)  
 When my sad dream broke off, and I awoke. [*Distant shouts heard.*  
 Ha ! what was that ? What is the matter, wench ?

*Enter MYNIS running.*

*Mynis.* Oh my lady ! Oh sweet madam ! they say they will presently fall a-fighting ; for that King Cluilius is dead, and that the new King is minded to have instant battle.

*Horatia.* The gods forbid !

*Enter FAUNA in haste.*

*Fauna.* Hast heard the news ? How can'st thou bide in doors Upon this moody fashion, when all Rome Stands tip-toe with anxiety, to learn How her stout soldiery do bear themselves Against the Alban battle ; for to-day (As the fleet courier, Rumour, giveth out,) The battle shall be fought. For shame ! for shame !

*Horatia.* Art sure of this ?—

*Fauna.* Aye, gloriously sure !—

*Horatia.* (*kneeling.*) If it be so, ye gods !—if it be so, And you decree that these once blended states Shall shed each other's blood ; shall set at naught, And upon hollow, frivolous, prettexts, Untenderly break through the num'rous ties That union wove ; and you 'll not interpose :— If this must needs be so, yet do I ask This one thing of ye ; let not in the fight

My father's sons their Alban kinsmen meet.  
Why I do ask this, ye that all things know  
Need not be inform'd !

*Fauna. (kneeling.)* And hear me, gods !  
But to a diff'rent tune :—Oh ! instantly,  
Into the meleé plunge the panting ranks,  
Up to their throats 'mid flashing sword and spear,  
'Mid plunging horses and thick falling men.  
Bid the shrill trumpets through the sounding host  
Peal their brave music. Let the neigh of horse,  
The shout of hero, all the glorious din  
Of war's proud tempest, thunder from the scene  
And bellow in our ears. In Roman breasts  
Plant highest daring. Let their serried ranks,  
Like a fierce phalanx of dread thunderbolts,  
Burst on the hostile front !  
And plant young Marcus i' the very thick  
O' the soul-stirring strife. Let him the deeds  
Of countless heroes do ; upon his helm  
Sits scores of triumphs. Let his hero-frame  
Buffet the fiercest billows of the storm,  
While twice ten thousand dangers round him swarm ;  
For I had rather he came home a corse,  
Than a mere common hero.—

Oh, would I were a warrior myself !

I cannot bide i' thy tame company.

Farewell, meek maid ! thou ill becom'st thy kin ! *[Exit FAUNA.]*

*Horatia.* Mysis, go forth and learn how matters tend.

*Mysis.* Alack-a-day ! I would I could have my will o' the man  
that first invented war. For once in my life I 'd turn shrew, and  
mar his face for him. The gods preserve my master and my  
master's house, Bubo included. *Exit MYSIS.*

*Horatia.* So now the worst draws on. E'en now perchance,  
His country and mine own are at fell blows.  
Sad expectation ! miserable thought !  
Is there no room for hope of better end,  
Than fear, that ever bargains for the worst,  
Proposes to my soul ?—

Come, sweet consoler, Hope ! some comfort coin  
A little while to lull my anxious soul.

Can'st thou not reason on this wise, sweet Hope ?—

“ The battle is a battle general,

“ Wherein are many hundred souls concern'd,

“ Of whom, most like, three-fourths shall safe return.

“ Why not amongst the rest, th' Horatii ?

“ Why should they be i' the minority ?

“ Hath not the more, more chance than hath the less,

“ Of having them for members ?—sure it hath ;

“ E'en cautious Reason may say yea to that.

"Yes, the Horatii shall come home again.—  
 "And if the Horatii,—then by the same rule,  
 "Their Alban cousins too."—Hush thee, dread Fear!  
 Why dost thou rudely sweet Hope interrupt  
 With petty quibbles and nice subtleties?  
 Peace, thou fastidious reas'ner! that must needs  
 Busy thyself about minutiae,  
 And to a hair's-breadth have a reason true!  
 Why need'st thou urge that the Horatii,  
 (And like to them their Alban relatives,)  
 Are hotly brave, on danger apt to rush;—  
 Why need'st unkindly urge that danger aye  
 Mows down the foremost first?—Be still, I say;  
 I will not hear thee: Hope is honier-lipp'd,  
 And I'll be taught of her: sweet Hope! again,—  
 If Rome do yield to Alba, then the twain  
 Become one state, and there the mischief ends.

Now why,—  
 Should Rome an Alban monarch less endure,  
 Than late a Sabine; and if Alba lose,  
 She doth return but to her former state,  
 Which was no hard one:—Metius naught will lose  
 By Alba's merger:—'tis the high in office,  
 By her miscarriage shall be sufferers.  
 Nay, he perchance, his high desert discern'd,  
 Shall get preferment i' the blended states.  
 Bless thee, sweet Hope! I feel my soul revive.  
 I calmer feel than I have done of late:—

[*Shouts suddenly heard in the distance.*]

Ha! what was that? great gods! was not that shouting?  
 Why; how is this? Sweet Hope! art chill'd so soon?  
 Why, wherefore art thou fled?—why, thou art like  
 The little tim'rous bird that flies away  
 Upon the faintest rustle!—Hark! again,—

[*Shouts repeated and more near.*]

Oh gods! the battle's fought, and all is o'er!  
 Hark! they are shouts of triumph! Rome is safe:—  
 But where, oh where is he that's close upon  
 More dear to me than Rome?

*Enter the elder HORATIUS as from hard riding, FAUNA and MYNIA following. Shouts and acclamations without.*

*Fauna. (aside.)* Now heav'n befriend her!

*Mynia. (aside.)* My poor mistress; oh!—

But this is worse than all:—what will she do?

*Horatia.* 'Pray you, good father, quick unload your news,  
 And let me know their kind—a battle's fought,  
 And unto Rome the gods have gracious been.  
 Who fell o' the other side? quick, quickly say!

*Horatius.* As yet, Horatia, there's no battle fought,  
Nor haply shall be :—on another wise,  
The gods decree the war shall be wound up.

*Horatia.* Thou dost not mean it! Peace? Is there peace between them?

*Horatius.* Peace? out upon 't, no, no, thou dost mistake  
My meaning; I did nothing say of peace.  
I bring thee news, my well-beloved wench,  
That I would fain deal out by slow degrees.

*Horatia.* Ha! that's because they make a sorry tune.

*Horatius.* Nay, nay, I know not that, I know not that.

*Horatia.* Where are my brothers? why are they not here?

*Horatius.* Thy brothers are as lusty, safe, and well,  
As when thou saw'st them last.

*Horatia.* Then wherefore pause?

Why art so slow to make me know thy news?

*Horatius.* Only because I know thee a strange wench  
That dost not think nor feel as others do.  
So, though I hither bring brave tidings,—such,  
That to the brim with joy they fill my soul,—  
I fear to tell them thee.

*Horatia.* Oh! let this cease.—

Father! upon my knees I do implore  
Thou 'lt let me know what thou hast got to tell.

*Horatius.* Wilt be now a brave wench, and hear my news  
In a brave spirit? Wilt a good lass be?

*Horatia.* Speak on: I'm fortitude from head to foot.

*Horatius.* The gods be prais'd for 't. Then, Horatia, know  
That on thy brothers' unassisted swords,  
(So giant glory piling on their heads,)  
Rome's fate doth hang suspended.

*Horatia.* What dost mean?

Oh gods! what dost thou mean?—Oh! this but makes  
The riddle darker!—'Pray you, plainer speak.

*Horatius.* It is decreed that Rome and Alba's strife,  
By champion-combat, not pitch'd battle, shall  
At length decided be; and our proud lot  
Is, that thy brothers are Rome's champions nam'd.

*Horatia.* The Horatii fight alone?—Th' Horatii take  
The battle to themselves?—No; is that so?

*Horatius.* Yea, so; I've told thee all, there's nothing more.  
Thou see'st 'tis no great matter: come, look gay.

*Horatia.* Great gods! where shall this end? Is there no stop,  
No limitation, and no boundary,  
Unto the spreading bulk of these big sorrows  
That daily huger grow? They fight alone?—  
Then unto one,—praps two,—praps all, good bye!  
Get you, Horatia, to your chamber quick,  
A burial's at hand; yea, put you on .

A fun'ral vesture ; yea so, make you ready  
To follow to mortality's last home,  
The sons your mother bore.

*Horatius.* Go to, go to :

Think better on 't, my girl, think better on 't.

*Horatia.* No, there's no chance : there's one at least must fall ;  
They cannot all survive. May the gods please  
To sort them out three feeble adversaries,  
But that's not ———

Hah ! what was that,—throne of eternal Jove !

Why, what was that ?

*Horatius.* So ! what was what, my girl ?

*Fauna.* Horatia, speak ; why dost so strangely stare ?

*Horatius.* Daughter, hast lost thy speech ! for heav'n's love,  
speak ;

Thou 'lt drive me crazy else ; speak, daughter, speak !

*Horatia.* If that be so, then heaven's of mercy void !

*Horatius.* If that be so ?—

*Fauna.* Horatia ! speak my love !

When thou said'st "what was that,"—what did'st thou mean ?

*Horatia.* That ghastly thought that did so ghost-like rise  
From out the depths of my deep-troubled soul !

*Horatius.* What dost thou mean ?

*Horatia.* Who fight o' the other side ?

*Horatius.* Nay, we'll no more on 't now, 'tis growing late.  
Shalt know o' that o' the morrow.

*Horatia.* Who fight o' the other side ? wilt tell or no ?

*Horatius.* Why, three mere men, no more, but three mere men.  
What matters it their names ?

*Horatia.* Thou palter'st skilfully ; then thou 'lt not tell ?

*Horatius.* Nay, seek to know no more ; I must be gone.

*Horatia (kneeling).* If thou 'dst not seeme drop a sudden corpse ;  
If thou 'dst not see me rolling at thy feet  
I' the death-struggle ; why, then out with it—  
Who fight o' the other side ?

*Horatius.* Nay, now be still ; I have forgot their names.

*Horatia.* One minute's more delay, and this heart bursts !

*Fauna.* Good sir ! 'twere better you should name the men.

*Horatius.* Now, by the gods ! the wench will craze my wits :  
What did'st thou ask ? Marry, I had forgot ;  
The Curiatii do fight for Alba.—

*Horatia.* I thought as much ; why that makes all things square :

Ha ! ha ! ha ! ha ! but this is merry news !

Ha ! ha ! ha ! there see now, how I laugh !—

There, lay me down : the death-sweat is upon me.

*Horatius. (supporting her with Fauna).*

[*She swoons.*

My fears did count on this : Horatia !

Horatia ! my beloved, rouse thee up ;

Ope these dear eyes, and look on me again !

*Fauna.* Horatia ! dearest wench ! revive again.

What ails thee, timid ! hist ! Horatia ! hist !

*Horatius.* Thou 'lt crack thy father's heart, an' thou dost thus  
To foolish fear surrender up thyself. [*She slowly revives.*]

Why so that's well : I must not have it thus,  
Or I shall sould :—Fie ! Fie ! thou timid thing !

Thy brothers shall return to thee again ;  
For thou dost know their prowess, and that they  
Must needs be victors ; and thou must not have  
About thine Alban cousins, foolish thoughts.  
They have their lawful chance, and fain would slay  
Thy brothers an' they could. Thou must forget  
The cousinhood o' the matter. And think too—

*Horatia (rising).* 'Pray now no more : the earthy race of man  
To heaven-enacted statutes subject is.

What haps below, originates above ;

And to small purpose can we disapprove.

As a loyal vassal of high-heaven's throne, }

I merely say, high-heaven's will be done ; }

I go to pray, and fain would pray alone. } [*Exit abruptly.*]

*Manet HORATIUS and FAUNA.*

*Horatius.* A sorry business this !

*Fauna.* I fear, Sir ! it will go but hardly with her, let who  
may fall on the morrow.

*Horatius.* My fears keep pace with thine ;—she's most tender  
stuff—a very bigot in love sisterly : howsoe'er glorious, either  
brother's death would sorely afflict her : she holdeth renown in  
such low estimation, that she would deem it bought over-dearly  
by them, at the price of a scratch't-finger.

*Fauna.* Methought, Sir !—it did seem unto her an extra grief  
that fate had match'd her Alban kinsmen 'gainst us.

*Horatius.* Aye,—there again, she hath these squeamish  
thoughts :—over sacredly rating the kinsmanship o' the matter.  
These Alban striplings in their younger years,—(but less of late  
since the two states were sunder'd : save he they called Metius,—  
and why that he came I can scarce tell thee, for of the three we  
did like him the least,)—were ever coupling with their Roman  
cousins in sport and pastime ; and these united ties of cousin-  
ship and playmate-hood, yonder weak wench holds it a sin to  
forget in fighting.

*Fauna.* Lov'd she them i' the lump, Sir !—or was there one  
did o'ertop the others in her affection ?

*Horatius.* What li'the way of amorous regard ? No,—in  
good sooth. It was not like and it did never hap. The one they  
call'd Metius was but a sullen knave, of very proud, imperious,  
and unsocial port ; one that did play the cynic wherever he  
came. He had his better parts,—but on the whole his manners  
did much mislike us. For certain he was no loveable being ;—

by sword and buckler ! he was more like in maiden's heart to gender fear than love. The other two were brisk and hearty lads, and did blossom well and soldierly in their youth ; but to lady's favours they gave but small heed, better loving, than dalliance with a maid, some rough and burly sport or enterprise of perilous tenor.—They were not like to breed the heart-ache in one so gentle as Horatia.—Wherefore didst ask ?

*Fauna.* Nay,—'twas but an idle question.

*Horatias.* No :—she doth see in them but near kinsmen and sometime playmates ;—'tis to her brothers that in the main her sharp grief referreth ; and there I fear me that, come the best about, it shall plentifully find fuel.—But there's no help for't.—We must commit the matter to the gods and let it run its course, —and when all's o'er must comfort her as best it may be done.

But soft,—I have my time o'erstay'd,—and must  
Back to the camps, where all is busy stir,  
To bide with my brave boys.

Wait kindly on thy weaker sister, girl !—  
I bore the tender-syllabl'd regards  
Of her stout brothers to her ; and do thou  
Express them duly :—And now, fare thee well !  
Farewell !—stout wench !—'till this high feat be done.  
Yet,—out upon my roguish memory !—  
I had forgot thy jovial hero, Marcus,  
Did by my lips commend his love to thee.

*Fauna.* Commend mine in return :—and say to him  
That I will see him ere the fight come off.

Meanwhile my prayers,—  
(Whose un-copartner'd and sole theme he is,)—  
Are phras'd and worded thus,—“The great gods grant  
“That valiant Marcus may come home at night,  
“A corse or conqueror, from this brave fight.”

*Horatius.* Adieu ! bold wench ! good prayers thou dost indite.  
[*Exit.*

*Manet FAUNA.*

*Fauna.* Yea !—valiant Marcus !—though I love thee well,  
And fain would see thy life o'erleap this bout,  
And leave death i' the lurch ;—yet would I not  
That thou should'st purchase of this mortal life  
An hour's prolongation, if the price  
Were honour's stunted growth. My poor Horatia  
Doth look with other eyes upon the times.  
Soft ! by the way, there's 'neath the surface more  
Than old Horatius haply doth espy.  
I potently suspect,—  
That i' the intercourse which held between  
These parallel branches of Sequinius' house,  
(Ere rupture interven'd), there did spring up



In young Horatia's soul, a secret love  
 For one o' these same Curiatii.  
 Methinks, there's in her 'haviour, traces plain  
 Of such a passion :—if't be so, the gods  
 Have mercy on her :—  
 Shall I go see her ? nay, 'twere better not :  
 Grief guests dislikes that are unlike itself,  
 And loves to pine alone. No ; I'll come back,  
 When even-tide draws on, and sit with her.  
 And now for mine own likings to provide :—  
 How shall I bear me i' the morrow's course ?  
 Shall I not join the throng, that then shall wend  
 Their eager way unto the lists, wherein  
 Rome's fate shall be decided ? That will I.  
 Yea ; I the combat boldly will go see ;  
 And not an inch of Marcus' noble might  
 Shall 'scape mine eager and adoring sight !

[Exit.]

## SCENE IV.—HORATIA'S Chamber.

*HORATIA pacing to and fro.*

*Horatia.* If I am found a living soul at sunset,  
 I am death-proof, and of mortality  
 Partake no tittle ! If this giant-grief  
 Unlife me not forthwith, then is there naught  
 Can kill, save poison and the dagger's point !  
 Lover and brother, pitted 'gainst each other  
 Like savage dogs—wolves o' the forest—bears !  
 To be shut up in lists to bait each other ;  
 To hew each other piecemeal ; to be madden'd  
 To rage and fury frightfully intense,  
 By whoops and yells, clapt hands, and loud halloos !—  
 Why am I not an instantaneous corpse ?—  
 Each other's throats with frantic force to clutch,  
 And tug and drag 'till one drop strangled down,  
 A livid carcase !—Am I flesh and blood,  
 That the thought's not my death ?—most horrible !  
 Ha ! now I see them :—why what haggard faces  
 Have they, and blood-shot eyeballs !  
 See how they clench their fists—how grind their teeth !  
 How foam at mouth—why, see now, how they wrestle !  
 See, see ! Oh, see !—why am I not struck dead ?  
 Leviathan anguish !—giant agony !  
 Smite me with madness, gods ! I cannot bear it.  
 Neither or both to love's impossible ;—  
 Either alone I will not ! Is't my place  
 To love the murder'd and the murderer,  
 Alike, and both at once ? would I were mad !  
 (*Kneeling.*) Powers benign ! ye potentates of heaven !

Unhinge my wits,—all senses paralyze—  
 Blast and confound,—wither,—root up,—destroy,  
 All that within me knoweth this from that !  
 Yea, make of me a mad-woman outright !  
 Reason, flee hence, thou'rt but a curse to me.  
 Go, as the baffled leech that cannot cure,  
 Quits the death-bed, to come again no more,  
 So go thou, Reason ! for thou can'st not school me  
 To endure this ill ! How now ?—who's there ?—who knocks ?

*Mysis. (Without.)* Sweet lady, Bubo's come, and with a letter.

*Horatia. (Rising.)* Jove's blessing speed the sender, in so far  
 As Rome can spare it : that's a prayer, I hope,  
 Lawful so limited :—

[*Opens the Door.*]

*Enter MYSIS and BUBO.*

There give it me,—there,—there,— ! [Snatches the Letter.]

I thank ye both : Oh, yes, I thank ye both !

(*Reads.*) "Meet me to-night when the sun's back is turn'd,

"Where first we struck the bargain of our loves.

"Horatia, fail me not !" Why then I'll not,—no,—no.

I thank ye both : Bubo, good soul ! how look'd he ?

Gaily and well,—or, look'd he something sad,

As though this matter griev'd him ?—'Bless ye, both !

Ye have my thanks,—but, Bubo !—how look'd he ?—

*Bubo.* Please you, dear lady, I did but for a small while see  
 him, he did so burn to have me on my way Rome-ward with  
 your letter ; but so it is, to say truth, my lady, I bethink me he  
 is a trifle out o' sorts as one would say.

*Horatia.* Hast naught to tell me of his looks or speech ?

*Bubo.* No, indeed, mistress !

*Horatia.* Why then begone, and leave me ; yet, I thank thee ;  
 Oh, don't ungrateful deem me, but begone ;  
 I'd bear my sorrows without lookers-on.

*Mysis.* Sweet mistress, you do look so woe-begone : let me stay  
 with thee.

*Horatia.* Now, never mind my looks ; go, good wench ! go.

I know thy love and goodness, and I thank thee.

But prithee go : I want no comfort now.

I've done with comfort ; I would grieve to death :

I'd drink in greedily of grief, in hope

'Twill poison prove. There is a pitch in woe,

Which when the soul hath reach'd, all comfort is

As bootless to't as physic to the dead.

So like a good wench go, and Bubo too.

And yet I thank ye.—

*Bubo.* 'Fore all the gods ! I'm turning blubberer.

[*Exeunt Mysis and Bubo, weeping.*]

*Manet HORATIA.*

*Horatia.* Meet him? aye, surely!—yet, go meet Rome's foe!—  
Ah! but no matter what he is to Rome,  
The query is, what is he unto me.  
Yes! I will go,—why not? why wherefore not?—  
Because I'm Roman born?—why, so I am,  
And that's the blackest item i' the account;  
For, were I not, I then could pray for him,  
And that should ease my soul; now I'm tongue-tied,  
And dare not do it, since it were, in wish,  
To be their murd'ress and a trait'ress too!—  
But I'll go see him, there's no harm in that.  
I do to Rome no wrong in meeting him.  
I'm not so potent an intelligence,  
That by a look, a word, a bare good-bye,  
I can make Rome the loser. No, I'll go;  
I'll comfort him to boot, if that may be.  
Why should I not? Doth love involve no duties,  
No holy and no sacred obligations,  
To cheer and cherish those who share its bands?  
Why, sure it doth; and mine's a lawful love.  
Our birth-places were not at enmity  
When we shook hands upon 't; and for himself,  
Never was man more worthy to be lov'd.  
I'll not give up my love;—I'll hold it fast,  
And die in it as I have in it liv'd.  
With all my soul I'll cheer him. Yea, I'll urge—  
“Metius, sink not, but keep thy spirits up;  
“We'll but postpone our nuptials for awhile,  
“To solemnize them in Elysium.  
“We'll not be wedded here; this selfish world  
“Is not a place where love can have its health.”  
Oh! would we were together even now.  
Come quicker, night! quicken thine o'er slow pace,  
And swiftly bear me to his blest embrace.

[*Exit.*

END OF ACT III.

## ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A retired part of the Alban Encampments.**Enter METIUS CURIATIUS.*

*Metius.* But I'm as bad as they ; we're all alike.  
Urge what we will, we at the bottom are  
A rotten race, whose evil lieth deep,  
And is, from full development, restrain'd  
By circumstances of unnoticed sway.  
But then, why don't I mend ?—  
Why !—why, because the conscience aint the heart,  
And 'tis the latter regulates the man.  
I loathe not that which yet I disapprove.  
O conscience ! I should like to wring thy neck,  
Thou traitor-principle, that riseth thus  
In enmity unnatural, against  
The very being thou art parcel of.  
Why dost thou thus—Why, ever and anon,  
Dost thou unsettle thus my peace o' mind ?—  
What, can't I sit me down to think awhile,  
To cogitate, to muse, but thou must thus  
With thine accursed accusations ply me ?  
Aye from my cradle hast thou dogg'd me so.  
Have I not told thee many hundred times  
I'd none o' thee—thou should'st not lord it o'er  
My will, affections, and my rest of self ?  
Ha ! no more o' that,—let's have no more o' that ;  
Urge not thou speakest by appointment of  
Our being's source and cause, whate'er that be.  
I care not ; thou shalt not enslave me so.  
I'll be the thing I am : I'll risk results.  
I say I've been a very honest man—  
I've never cut a throat, save martially—  
I never pilfer'd from my neighbour's stores—  
I've never broke,  
In any great degree, the laws of blood—  
I've been a good and loyal citizen—  
In all things have I won the world's esteem.  
Look at my practice,—can'st pick holes in that ?  
Then never mind my heart, what's that to thee ?  
Why, if thy rigid rules must be enforc'd,  
Yon gentle maid I love,—that is so good,—  
So pious t'wards the gods,—such as they are,—  
Could not pass muster. Thou dost anger me  
Past all endurance. Impudent zealot ! peace !  
Wert thou to preach for twice ten thousand years,

I would not be the thing thou 'dst have me be.  
 I'd bide the thing I am,—I like that best.  
 But if thou 'lt only to my will succumb,  
 I'll then be friends and make our quarrel up.  
 Oh! that I could but thee annihilate.  
 Self-condemnation is what thou enforcest,  
 And that's the hateful feature in thy force.  
 But I'll no more on 't.—  
 No; I'll go drown thy croaking tones in her's :  
 I'll go and recompense me with her love :  
 She never finds fault with me as thou dost.  
 Then, laggard darkness ! 'priethee mend thy pace,  
 And quickly bring us lovers face to face.

[Exit.

SCENE II.—*Another part of the Alban Encampments.*

*Enter CÆLIUS and QUINTUS CURIATIUS.*

*Cælius.* Go to ; it cannot be ;—I'll ne'er believe  
 That one so sage and philosophical,  
 So high and mighty as our haughty brother,  
 Could ever come to love a wench, so mild,  
 So gentle, spiritless, and weak of wit,  
 As our she-cousin !

*Quintus.* Ah ! thou dost not look  
 Beneath the surface. I have often heard  
 Metius himself discourse it on this wise :—  
 " Like parts, like powers, like endowments, ne'er  
 " Produced affection ; they may generate  
 " What like it looks, but not the thing itself ;  
 " For they the fundamental principle  
 " Whereon affection resteth, do exclude ;  
 " To wit, dependence i' the one or other.  
 " Affection groweth 'twixt two beings, such,  
 " That one supplieth what the other lacks :  
 " (So woman's graceful weakness fondly leans  
 " Upon man's coarser strength ; and that reliance  
 " Doth of itself, by Nature's ordinance,  
 " Elicit his affection in return ;  
 " And under this relation she becomes  
 " The queen of his affections—a priz'd pearl—  
 " A cherished being—a yet dearer self—  
 " Not a mere pal or crony, from like tastes,  
 " Like powers, passions, and propensities,  
 " But when the twain are equal and alike,  
 " (Or in proportion as they near that state,)  
 " Their love is not so much reciprocal,  
 " As 'tis a common love o' self-same things ;  
 " A mere congruity of tastes ; a mere  
 " Like-mindedness, like that which doth unite

"Our cousin Marcus and his mettled Fauna."  
 Conformably with this, didst never note  
 How Metius ever seemed to like the maid  
 Of modest, gentle, and non-sage-like sort ;  
 While your man-minded women he ne'er priz'd,  
 (Save i' the way of mere acquaintanceship,)  
 And never "women" called them, but "she-men!"

*Coelius.* Nay, Quintus, I am no philosopher,—  
 But 'fore the gods! I 'gin to think that he  
 Indeed doth love her.

*Quintus.* 'Tis the only key  
 Unlocks the riddle of his late behaviour.

*Coelius.* Why, then, but we must seek him out at once,  
 And charge it on him, that he instantly  
 Discard his foolish passion, and call up  
 His stoutest mettle for th' approaching bout.

*Quintus.* Why, there's the rub—thou know'st his fiery spirit?

*Coelius.* His fiery spirit! pish for his fiery spirit!  
 S' death, fire, and furies! what, are we to be  
 The victims of his cupid-fooleries!—  
 Are we, i' this heroic encounter,  
 To be left i' the lurch or sacrificed,  
 Because, forsooth, he'll please to be in love,  
 And of the action leave his third undone?—  
 By Jove! I have 'nt patience with the thought!  
 If a man must love let him do 't in season.  
 I'll seek him out at once: I'll let him know  
 My mind i' the affair.

*Quintus.* Now, Coelius, pause,—  
 I do conjure thee pause:—you'll mischief do.  
 Metius is not the man to brook rebukes,  
 And least of all on such a theme as this.  
 I have bethought me of a plan to move  
 His ancient ardour, and to spur his soul  
 To mood more fitting the occasion. I  
 Will spokesman be:—do you but hold your peace.  
 Shall we go seek him?

*Coelius.* Aye, without delay:  
 But drive the matter home.—'Fore Mars! the time  
 Will not admit of mincing ceremony.  
 Our Roman cousins are of such degree,  
 It will not do to meet as two to three.

*Quintus.* Have with you then: but let me spokesman be! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—*Another part of the Alban Encampments.*

*Enter METIUS CURIATUS.*

*Metius.* The more I muse, the deeper I but sink  
 In indecision's depths!—Within my soul,

Of Roman and of Alban sympathies  
 So tough a conflict wages, for my life  
 I can't decide 'twixt the competitors ;—  
 And all my musings, cogitations, thoughts,  
 Arguments, meditations, reasonings,  
 But shut me up to this,—she must decide.  
 One only truth, can I consider clear ;  
 To wit, that if her heart's-wish that way tend,  
 Those accurst lists shall not my foot-print know !  
 Let her but say,—  
 “ An' thou could'st, coz ! for my sake, be content  
 “ To be call'd coward, traitor, love-sick fool,  
 “ An' thou could'st brave this and not fight my brothers,—  
 “ So horribly confounding of our loves.”——  
 Let her say half so much, and 'fore the gods !  
 I'll see those jobbers i' the Tiber sunk,  
 Ere I'll set foot i' the lists :—Ha !—who come here ?  
 My brothers !—So !—I'm in no mood I fear  
 To be contrasted with their red-hot zeal !  
 Pah !—how it galls me !—and yet why, when griefs  
 More potent are by the occasion bred ?—  
 Should not the greater, the less ill annul ?  
 It seems not so with me ;—but as a man  
 That lay e'en in the article of death,  
 Would howl an' one but stoutly pull'd his nose,  
 So I, that have worse woes upon my back,  
 Yet heed this lesser ill !—but down, rash temper !  
 Bear with them,—keep the peace,—since that the morrow  
 Your brotherhood may sever.

*Enter CÆLIUS and QUINTUS CURIATIUS.*

*Quintus.* Give you good night !—  
 How fares it with you, brother ?  
*Metius.* Why passing well,—the quiet eventide  
 Hath lured me out o' doors,—and the still camps  
 Invite to thoughtfulness !  
*Quintus.* How run your thoughts ?  
*Metius.* Upon the times, as may be do your own.  
*Quintus.* We have been thinking of the night wherein  
 Our father died !  
*Metius.* So, so,—and what of that ?  
*Quintus.* We have remember'd how we stood around  
 The tumbled couch, that did support his frame  
 By fever wasted, and wherein the breath  
 Of life did fast ebb out, whilst round about,  
 In loose confusion i' the piteous chamber,  
 Did lie the soldierly accoutrements,  
 That he had worn in fight ;——  
 His dented sword athwart his pillow lay,

Hard by his bruised helm ; and at his feet  
Did lie a heap of batter'd martial gear,  
That in time past, i' the hot heat of battle,  
Had cloth'd his limbs :—Thou dost remember this ?

*Metius.* Yea !—yea !—what more ?—what more ?

*Quintus.* We, weeping, stood  
About his bed, whilst thou, his fav'rite son,  
Upon thine heaving bosom staid his head,—  
(That pitifully shook with feebleness,)  
And then, discerning that his death was near,  
He spake these words ;—" My sons ! these, my last words,  
" Hear, nor forget. Ye are a soldier's heirs ;  
" Begot of him, whose grey hairs now must be  
" Committed to their honourable grave.  
" As I have liv'd, live ye. As I have done,  
" Do ye, and get you honourable names,  
" Names high in worldly fame. I have observ'd,—  
" (What once did hold betwixt your sire and theirs)—  
" A goodly emulation show itself  
" Between ye and your Roman relatives,  
" The young Horatii ;—look to it, my sons,  
" That they eclipse you not ; for they are youths  
" Of noble promise, and I would not have  
" It seen that those your buried mother bore  
" Unto her Alban lord, less mettled were  
" Than those her sister to a Roman brought.  
" If thou can'st ever throw them i' the shade  
" In feats of martial prowess, do it, Sirs.  
" And briefly more at large ;—noble renown,  
" Covet and love before all guerdons else.  
" What greater guerdon should man live to gain,  
" Than golden honour, than the world's applause ?  
" These, then I charge ye to achieve and get  
" At whatsoever cost : yea, let what will  
" Betide beside, get honourable names.  
" That when we do hereafter meet, my sons,  
" Neither need blush upon the interview."—  
And then he died !

*Metius.* Why ; that is so, in sooth !  
And wherein doth this mournful story bear  
Upon the present time ?

*Quintus.* Herein, of course :  
That our dead father's fondest hopes could ne'er  
Occasion for their rich fulfilment find,  
More full than that the morrow tenders us ;—  
Whereat we joy, as it is meet we should.  
But wherefore look'st thou thus ?—what ails thee, Metius ?

*Metius.* You oily hypocrites ! you smooth-tongued snakes !—

*Quintus.* Metius, 'fore all the gods, what moves thee thus ?



*Metius.* If it was your unbrotherly design,  
And savage purpose, by this dismal tale  
To cut me to the quick, you've hit your mark.  
But hear me, braggarts! hear me, slanderers!—  
I've fought where dangers did as thickly swarm  
As gnats at twilight. I have bearded death  
Where he in thickest volleys dealt his dooms,  
And thinn'd our ranks the freest;—  
In peril, I've up to the armpits fought,  
And prov'd myself a soldier, good and true,  
On fields a dozen; and my father's ghost  
Need never blush to recognise his son's,  
When they encounter i' the other world.

*Quintus.* We meant you no offence.—

*Metius.* You did; you did.—

Oh! I discern your drift; you know that I  
Am to this fight averse, and you come here,  
Pluming yourselves upon your fervency,  
And seeming likeness to our father's mind;  
Wherein you deem me much undutiful,  
That outwardly I am unlike yourselves.  
So virtuous are you and so filial?  
Why, you do love this fight for its own sake,  
And do your father's wishes, but because  
They chance to be on all fours with your own.  
Had you ne'er had a father, you'd have fought  
Upon as hearty stomachs; shame! go to!  
Is this so filial and so virtuous?  
As much so t'were, to eat when one is hungry;  
To wed when love-sick, or to sleep when weary;  
As to do that, the which to leave undone,  
Were sore self-denial! worthy jest!  
That one unbound should boast he can go free!

*Coelius.* Now, Metius, wilt thou—

*Metius.* What hath that mighty hero got to say?

*Quintus.* Oh! let's not quarrel at a time like this!

*Metius!* to-morrow's sun may corpses see us,  
Then let's keep friends. *Coelius,* just step aside;  
*Metius* and I will then commune alone.

*Coelius.* So, so, I will, and I'll be back anon.

*Quintus.* You did mistake us most entirely;  
Be witness heaven you did!

*Metius.* It may be so, it may be so, but so,  
It did not seem; and yet, it may be so.  
For oftentimes when we do know ourselves  
To misconstruction liable, we're apt,  
O'er readily, to deem us misconstrued:  
And of accusing being apprehensive,  
Do think it made where it doth making lack.

[*Erit.*]

So pray you then your pardon, and let pass  
Mine hasty error. I am ill at ease.

*Quintus.* Wilt thou not tell me, what it is that hangs  
Thus on thy spirit!

*Metius.* When our shades shall meet  
On that grim river's shores, and we have left  
The many prejudices of the flesh  
Behind us i' the world, thou shalt know all ;  
But for this present let thus much content ye :—  
I hold it very sad that kindred states,  
Like Rome and Alba, 'twixt whose citizens,  
Peace, friendship, and goodwill, have held till now,  
Should be set by the ears by selfish chiefs,  
Who 'd brook to see their subjects wholesale swept  
Into their graves, so they themselves thereby,  
An inch of sway or fame the more achiev'd.  
And furthermore it pains me much, that we  
Should 'gainst such near and well-beloved kin  
Like dogs be pitted.—'Pray now, comment not  
Upon my foolish thoughts, but leave me here.  
Being down hearted, I did ever find  
That solitude my best physician made.  
Now, in all unity and brother-love,  
'Give you good night.

*Quintus. (aside).* I dare not touch on the main circumstance !—  
Nay, then I'll go, since you will have it so ;  
But let me thus much urge or ere I go.  
In life there's no event but doth involve,  
Though in unequal measures, good and ill :  
And when our duties and our likings clash,  
Yet we may not th' unwelcome office 'scape  
The former thrusts upon us ; 'twere unwise,—  
(As over-frequently the custom is)—  
The dark-side only to regard, disheeding  
The counter-good that with the ill is mixed !

*Metius.* Pray you, be brief!

*Quintus.* I will :—I have to charge,  
That you unto the morrow's office give  
But this one-sided heed ; and thereto art  
Thus morbidly averse, from your regard  
But to its drawbacks, wilful overlooking  
Wherein it also is desirable.  
What !—Is there naught to plead o' the other side ?  
Is there no counter-good may equipoise,  
If not outweigh, the ill you deprecate ?  
I do conjure you think  
Of the rich glory that may be achiev'd  
I' the encounter :—Of the bright renown  
It shall bequeath us, if but bravely done.

Or if that argument, of its own weight,  
 May not re-hearten you, go on to think  
 How 'twill undo us if unbravely done,—  
 That if we quail and flinch, upon a cause  
 (Wherein our fellows shall not sympathise),  
 We, i' the stead of rapturous acclaim,  
 Shall get loud hootings, obloquy, and shame.

*Metius (aside.)* Was ever man in such a piteous case—  
 When two sides claim me, and when I to both  
 Cannot incline, yet am to neither loth ?

*Re-enter CÆLIUS CURIATIUS.*

*Cælius.* Quintus ! Art ready—hast with Metius done ?

*Quintus.* Wilt think of this ?

*Metius.* Yea ! very thoughtfully.

Pray, now, for heaven's love ! hence to your beds,  
 And leave me here alone.

*Cælius.* Metius ! a word,—

I speak but as a brother,—bear with me.

I do conjure thee fail not at this pinch,

For all our glory, joint and several,

Lies on the morrow staked !

*Metius.* I shall go mad !—

For heaven's love ! take my answer and begone.

If I do fight I'll Mars himself outshine ;

If I fight not be the shame wholly mine !

*Cælius.* So be it then :—Good night ! shall we look to  
 Your armour, and adjust it ?

*Metius.* Do so, and I will thank you,—so, good night !

*Quintus.* Why then, adieu ! 'till dawn. [*Exeunt.*]

*Manet METIUS CURIATIUS.*

*Metius.* Glory ?—aye there's the rub ! I am not proof  
 Against that tempter's arts—against the baits,  
 That that incentive potent angles with :  
 Alas ! why is it thus ?—why, but that I  
 For nothing higher do exist and live,  
 Than man's applause, than human eulogy ?  
 And yet, and yet,—  
 Earthly renown ! what art thou, fairly gauged ?  
 What art thou, idol glory ! if we pry  
 Into thy nature ; scan thee narrowly ?  
 Thou art but so much unexpensive praise  
 That nothing costs the praiser ; 'tis to him  
 As cheap as is the dirt beneath his feet.  
 Thou'rt not  
 Intrinsically worthy ; for thy standard's  
 Human opinion, which doth ofttimes err.

Thou art not permanent ; for thou dost change,  
Aye with the fashion of our sentiments,  
One age condemning what another lauds.  
Thou art not merit-bought ; for frequently  
Nought but good-luck, caprice, or accident  
Confers thy title. Thou 'rt not durable ;  
For what to-day hath earn'd with muckle toil  
Ofttimes the morrow forfeits, through caprice  
I' thy fickle donor. Thou 'rt not well-begot ;  
For oh ! how oft the idols glorifiers  
(That idol, be it poet, soldier, sage,  
Or aught else man converteth to a god)  
Are they the idols private judgment spurns.  
How oft the hero's worshippers, for instance,  
Are they that would their legs the fastest use  
To 'scape the hero's office :—Fie ! O fie !  
How can I value thus, and grudge to lose  
The adoration of mere fellow-worms ?  
And this is earthly fame !—good lack !—good lack !  
And even thus much 'tis to him alone  
Hath luck to live to realize it thus.  
Why, that's a point—aye, marry is it,—for  
Glory ! thou cozeners ! resolve me this.  
If I do get my throat cut in this fray,  
Where's my reward, my fee, my recompense ?—  
Wilt tell me thou wilt shine behind my back—  
That thou wilt settle on my memory,  
Which shall become an undecaying theme  
Unto the gossips of posterity ?  
What's that to me when I am in my grave,  
Where nothing o' the sort is audible ?  
Marry ! what charm can music minister  
To him that's fast asleep ? Or wilt thou urge  
The other world will laud the deeds o' this ?—  
Why, where's the proof,—why, where's the guaranty  
That mortal feats are thus admired by  
The next world's population ? Glory ! where ?—  
Thou know'st not, and I know not :—What a fool  
Is man to run such risks on thine account !  
Oh ! I could spurn thee ; but here lies the rub :—  
He that doth scorn thee, widely-worshipp'd idol !  
Doth pull thine opposite about his ears,  
The heritage of scorn ! wherefrom I shrink,  
Yea, and how wincingly ?—And then again  
My sire's dying words.—Oh ! what's to do !—  
Unto which claimant shall I give the palm ?  
My love, or my fair fame !—How curst to be  
Thus moitied 'twixt adverse sympathies,  
That with such equi-cogent wherefores ply me,

That I may not between the twain elect.  
 Why, then, I say again, let her decide.  
 The mid of night is near, and I'll begone,  
 To meet mine own lov'd girl, and from her I  
 Alone will learn if I shall fight or fly.

[Exit.]

SCENE IV.—*A Tent.—Time, towards midnight.*

*The HORATIUS sleeping. The elder HORATIUS looking on them.*

*Marcus. (in sleep.)* Ha ! 'ware ! Hostus ! 'ware ! why, well-struck, lusty Caius !

Now, gods ! stand up for Rome !—Hist ! Hostus ! hist !  
 Mind yourself leftward !—ha ! that stroke went home !  
 Now, haughty cousin ; now, this to thine heart !  
 So, so ; come on ; so, so, shalt know me now ;  
 So, so ; so, so ; didst thou not feel me then ?

*Horatius.* The body slumbers, but the spirit wakes,  
 Forestalling thus the fury of the fight  
 In visionary deeds. I know not why,

But I've not that alacrity of soul,  
 And glowing relish for this feat of arms,  
 I had by day ; I'm something moody grown.  
 Night's gloomy stillness on th' afore-prized fray,  
 Doth seem to make me look with other eyes.

Is it with moral as things natural,—  
 With actions, as with things material,—  
 They only shine by day ? their lustre, glow,—  
 (Or whatsoever charms) are they deriv'd,  
 And not essential, or intrinsical ?

Night-thoughts are nasty things ; they do suck out,  
 Like leeches, the life's-blood of human hopes,  
 Of human purposes and human plans ;  
 Making them all unsatisfying seem.

What art thou, thing ! that thus steal'st forth by night,  
 And roameth like a spectre through the soul,  
 Spoiling our cheer ; damping our spirit's glow ;  
 Decrying human good ; miscalling all  
 That man deems good, great, and heroical ?  
 Peace, principle ! whate'er thou art, lie still ;  
 I will not hear thee grumbling, moody thing !  
 Thou owl o' the heart, that hidest thee by day,  
 (Or while we with our fellows social mix,)

And only screeches in us at night-time,  
 Or when we are alone. Peace ; I'll not heed thee.  
 Sure night was meant for sleep, and not for thought ;  
 For thought grows moody then and melancholic.  
 False, lying night—that would make out as though  
 Ourselves, our actions, thoughts, pursuits, and aims,

Would not bear looking into—is a season  
 We should sleep through, not with thought occupy.  
 So I'll in slumber sink my consciousness.  
 I do grow sleepy-eyed ; I 'gin to drowse ;  
 And forasmuch as i' the state of sleep  
 We do as much our personal selves forget,  
 As ought that of us independent is,  
 Why, so, good night mine aged self, good night.  
 Now, Morpheus ! drowsy, sleep-bestowing god !  
 I pray thee sort me out a merry vision.

[Sleeps. Scene closes.]

SCENE V.—*A secluded spot on the banks of the Tiber. Time, midnight.*

*Enter METIUS CUBLATIUS.*

*Metius.* 'Tis sweet to walk, day's hurly burly o'er,  
 In the meek quiet of the midnight hour,  
 When this huge ant-hill's busy occupiers  
 In drowsy sleep forget officious care.  
 How still and silent 's all around, as if  
 Entire nature sat in reverie,  
 And thoughtful musing ; yea, no sound is heard  
 Saving the rustle of the restless leaves ;  
 With, now and then, a distant eagle's caw  
 That 's frighted in his sleep ; or the quick plash  
 Of some unslumbering and startled fish,  
 The Tiber's depths reseeking hastily.  
 Soft ! soft ! it is the spot, it is the spot,  
 Where first our loves did spy each other out  
 And got acquainted ; aye, it is the same.  
 How little change hath o'er the scene itself  
 Passed since that time. The very stones do seem  
 The same that then sustained us ;—yon grim trees,  
 That look, wrapt in night's sable liveries,  
 Trick'd out funereally, at intervals,  
 With seeming melancholy air, slow waving  
 Their branches to and fro—they are the same.—  
 Thou too, thou famous river ! art unchang'd,  
 Save that the hollow murmur of thy stream,  
 As roll thy surges by, a trifle seems  
 More dirge-like than of old ; but that may be  
 The rather in my fancy than the fact.  
 Yes, ye unliving things ! ye are the same.  
 So am not I—Hush ! hark ! was that her step ?  
 (Nay, how my heart doth thump against my breast !)  
 Hush !—yea, 'tis her !—(but this is passing strange !  
 The trumpet's flourish, on the brink of battle,  
 Did never move me more.)—Lo ! where she comes—

Modesty drawn from out her chaste retreat  
By resolute affection !——

*Enter HORATIA, who falls on his bosom.*

May all the powers that be good and kind,  
With lavish blessing bless thee ! Art thou well ?  
I fear thou 'rt not !—Whence is this ashy paleness ?  
Is it thy cheeks true hue, or an imposture  
Wrought by the moonbeams that have settled on 't ?

*Horatia.* Oh ! cousin ! I am very woe begone !

*Metius.* Oh ! weep not thus : Oh ! weep not thus, sweet wench !  
Oh ! let not sorrow's dew so fast distil.  
What ? would'st thou rival midnight's tear-like drops,  
In number as in pearl-like beauty ? Come,  
Come, cheer thee up : I'm on the brink myself  
To play the woman, for thou dost unman me.  
Now, sit we down upon this bank hard by,  
And let us reason of this evil hap :—  
We'll find a way to rob it of its sting.

*Horatia.* No, no, we must not talk of that ; no, no,  
We must not reason ; we have but to act.  
The time no doubt is sorrowful enough,  
We've naught to do with that :—no, for ourselves  
We have but right and room to say farewell,  
And then shake hands and part.

*Metius.* What dost thou mean ?

*Horatia.* I mean our feelings, they must be suppress'd ;  
They but affect ourselves. We must not do  
As they would have us ;—so let's say farewell.  
When thou hast me forgot and put aside ;  
When I to thee have ceased to be the thing  
Thy favourable kindness made me once—  
(What time there was no crime in thy regard)—  
Thou'lt much more happy feel :—'twill simplify  
Thy mystically-complicated straits.  
A heart divided, dragg'd two ways at once,  
Is like a body to wild horses tied,  
Its agonies we should not seek to paint.  
When we have cancell'd former kindnesses,  
These then will cease to vex your spirit, sir !

*Metius.* I needs must say I understand thee not.

*Horatia.* Cousin !—we'd better part :—we'd better do  
That which befits the time.

*Metius.* Great gods !—and can'st thou handle matters thus ?

*Horatia.* Necessity is on me laid to do 't.  
I am a Roman maiden. Rome, Sir, is  
The native city wherein I was born.  
My sire, brothers, fellow-citizens,  
Kinsfolk, acquaintance,—all are Roman too ;

My mother's grave, my sometime happy home,  
My childhood's haunts,—they all, sir! are at Rome.  
Wherefore needs must that I take part with her :—  
Rome's champions too—Sir, we must part.  
There cannot be a doubt that we should part.  
Oh! I regret that I have hither come.

*Metius.* Now, hear me, unintelligible girl!

*Horatia.* Nay, do not frown, if but for charity.  
I am not happy as thou mayest judge.  
I am not happy :—an' thou think'st me so  
Thou dost mistake :—I am not happy,—no,  
I have a few small woes upon mine head :—  
Add not your frowns unto them. Yes, I say,  
I have some griefs to bear.

*Metius.* And so have I :—

I do believe there's not on earth that man  
Whose soul endureth what I now endure!  
If I could do it, thou should'st have thy way.  
Yes, if for us to part would give thee peace,  
Why then whate'er might come of it to me,  
We'd part this instant :—Yes, by yon starr'd sky,  
Yon firmament that curtains o'er the dread  
And solemn mysteries of untried fate!  
I swear I'd do it!—but it may not be.  
Sooner might soul and body part, yet both  
Keep living things, as my soul part from thee.  
Ask me my life,—(and hand me but a sword)  
'Tis thine instant; but the soul's a thing,  
O'er which we have no particle of power,  
It laughs the will to scorn!—

*Horatia.* Ah! now I see

I have done very wrong to meet thee here.  
Sir! I must go,—

*Metius.* Thou shalt not :—

By the broad heaven above, thou shalt not stir.—  
No, thou strange girl! (and yet a dear one, too);  
But thou shalt hear me :—Hear me then, Horatia!—  
How this affair my inward soul hath rack'd  
Nought but my soul can know; but thy chill port  
Hath centupled its pangs.—Nay, hear me out;  
Hear how staunch love of thee in me hath wrought.  
I am an Alban; Alba is to me  
As dear as Rome to thee. She is my country;  
My native, and my often-bled for land.  
Her people are my national kin as much  
As are the Romans thine. Unto her state  
The voice of nature and of citizenship,  
Proclaim I owe my ablest energies,  
My stoutest soldiership, at this fell pinch.



I've had, to-night, my sire's dying words  
 Rung in mine ears, and they, with emphasis  
 Most potent, bade me to go fight this fight.  
 I have a fame, than which a better one  
 Did never yet enrich a soldier's name ;  
 The which, to hang back at this crisis, would  
 For evermore blot out. The influence,  
 That love of thee hath on my spirit had,  
 Hath bared me to reproachful calumnies,  
 To galling hints, and cutting sarcasms :—  
 All these confederated arguments,  
 Have I withstood from love of thee and thine,  
 And hither came to tell thee, that if I  
 Could not, without destruction of our loves,  
 Fight out this brutal and abhorred fight,  
 Come what come might, I would not fight at all :—  
 Judge then 'twixt thee and me, if it be meet  
 That thou should'st use me with the chill reserve  
 That were a foeman's due ?—

*Horatia.* Alas ! alas !—

I cannot keep it up :—my soul gives way.  
 I now perceive I ought not to have come.  
 Oh ! what would'st have, that may not militate  
 'Gainst that I owe my country and my kin ?—

*Metius.* Only but this, thou pearl ! that thou wilt say  
 What on the dev'lish morrow I shall do.

*Horatia.* Should'st thou that question of a Roman ask ?

*Metius.* Of such a Roman ; yea, by life and death !  
 And by that Roman's answer I'll be bound  
 To the very letter.

*Horatia.* Wilt not spare me this ?

*Metius.* No ; by thine excellence, I cannot do't.

*Horatia.* Then hear me, Metius, hear me once for all.

I will not meet thy wishes in this thing,—  
 I will not that I wish myself reveal,—  
 I will not tell thee what I'd have thee do,—  
 I will not speak as of or for myself.  
 If thou wilt force me to point out the way,  
 All things consider'd, thou art bound to tread ;  
 If thou wilt thrust such cruel office on me,  
 I shall then tell what duty bids thee do,  
 What she enjoins, not what I should prefer :  
 Though what she bids shall mine own feelings pierce  
 To their very marrow.

*Metius.* Say on ; say on.

*Horatia.* Thou art of Alban birth and parentage,  
 And Alban kindred, who upon thee have  
 The antecedent and the prior claim  
 To thine affections and supreme concern ;

Thou also art an Alban citizen,  
And ere thou knew'st us, did'st thy country owe  
Allegiance, fealty, and attachment loyal,  
Thy best and heartiest efforts in all straits  
The gods might bring upon her; and these ties  
The rights of primogeniture do claim,  
And should be cared for first.

*Metius.* So be't; but hark!  
If I do fight, and do the fight survive,—  
(Which may not be but by your brothers' deaths,)—  
Wilt love me still?

*Horatia.* 'Pray now, no more:  
I've answer'd thee in that thou did'st demand,  
I'll bide no further question—I must go.  
Let's say farewell, and go our ways from hence.

*Metius.* Not till that question hath been answer'd me.

*Horatia.* Art thou so selfish, to enforce my soul  
To answer such a question.

*Metius.* I am.

*Horatia.* I did not look for this.

*Metius.* I cannot help it, answer'd I must be;  
Or, by the gods! no sword of mine I'll draw.

*Horatia.* What shall I do?—Alas!—alas! Why then,  
If thou dost fight my brothers on such wise—

*Metius.* Horatia! if I fight, be sure of this,—  
That not a blow shall I against them urge,  
But, were it possible, I'd ransom it  
With twenty 'gainst myself.

*Horatia.* Wilt thou indeed?

Why, then if thou dost fight upon that sort,  
I think the gods will let me love thee still.

*Metius.* I care not what the gods will let thee do;  
What wilt thou do thyself?

*Horatia.* Metius, forbear!

I grieve to hear thee say such shameful words,  
And shall not better love thee for such speech.

*Metius.* Why, thou dost drive me unto uncouth speech,  
And words irreverent, that I did not mean.  
Horatia! didst thou know my spirit's state,  
Thou wouldst not haggle with me on this wise.

*Horatia.* Ah me! ah me! I'm grievously beset!  
Oh! then there's naught I think can hap, that can  
My love for thee unrivet, or destroy.

*Metius.* Why, bravely said;—why, bravely said, my girl!  
Now that brief truth's worth all thou ever spok'st,  
Save the first yea, at th' outset of our loves.  
Nay then, but I will fight.

*Horatia.* Hah! what dost mean?

Stay, stay,—Oh stay! ah! whither hast thou lured me?  
Did I incite thee to fight with my brothers?

*Metius.* No, thou but said'st my duty bade me do't.

*Horatia.* Ah ! but if thou dost take my word for that,  
I will be wary, I will think again.

What shall ensue if thou forbear'st to fight ?

*Metius.* Why, unto me shame worse than death itself ;  
An ocean of reproach and obloquy.

*Horatia.* Oh ! did the ill but fall on us alone  
We must endure it ; I did not mean that :—

But how shall Rome and Alba end their strife ?

*Metius.* By a pitch'd battle ; other way there's none.

*Horatia.* By a pitch'd battle, said'st thou ?

*Metius.* Aye, indeed.

*Horatia.* Why then, methinks, there cannot be a doubt  
But it doth lay on thee to fight this fight.

Thou dost not need that I, or duty, or  
Aught but the charity of thine own heart,  
Should arm thee, and conduct thee to the lists.

No ; when I think,

How many souls shall unejected be—

How much of blood shall not pollute our soil—

How many wives shall husbanded remain—

How many babes shall orphanhood escape—

How dense a swarm of locust-sorrows shall

From lighting in our coasts be stopt,—by this

Thy sole monopoly of all the cost,—

I feel that it doth lay on thee to fight ;

I feel there is no doubt about the thing ;

And if thou dost it in such frame of mind,

Beloving whom thou kill'st, and after weep'st,

As brother over brother should lament ;

I here do pledge me, (as I feel I may,) )

That I will love thee after as before

If I be spared to live to love at all.

*Metius.* Heaven ! I thank thee ; now my soul knows peace.

Irresolution's most distressful rule

Is ended now. I know the path to tread.—

Thou peerless girl ! thou hast done more for me

Than twice ten thousand blear-eyed sages could ;

The bearded babblers called philosophers.

Rotten at bottom as both sexes show,

(And there's a fatal screw loose i' the depths

Of proud humanity ; do what we will

To varnish o'er the fact,—boast as we may,

'Bout what doth pass for virtue i' the world)

Yet woman, when she keepeth womanly,

Seems to engross what little heart-good's left.

Oh ! 'tis the heart that needs to be reform'd,

Remoulded, and recast. Rectify that,

And reason, understanding, intellect,

Would never vastly err.  
 Oh ! if hereafter there's a judgment that  
 Shall look into the heart more than the act,—  
 Shall principles, not conduct, merely scan,—  
 Why then how many of our virtuous folk,  
 Our moral ones, shall come but poorly off !  
 In man's morality, when cleanest faced,  
 'Tis not all gold that glitters. I for one,  
 (And I've not outwardly been vastly vile,)  
 Should not much relish heart-investigations.  
 Virtue ! mere human virtue ! 'tis a thing  
 Begot of policy, not principle,  
 That will not stand the test if thoroughly probed.  
 We're virtuous only while it pays our hire,  
 Be't human commendation, or what not.  
 But, sweet my love ! there's one thing wonders me.  
 There's in thy portance a tranquillity,  
 A very mystic, strange serenity,  
 I did not look to find.

*Horatia.* Aye, so it is ;—  
 But I know not its cause : but so it is.  
 A sort of calm pervades me :—but oh ! then,  
 It is a calm that's joyless and forlorn ;  
 More desolate than glad. —  
 And I do feel so unconcerned 'bout life ;  
 I feel as though my heart were dead, and I  
 Were living on without it.—Nay, I would  
 If it did please the gods, that I might die,  
 Nor live to mourn to-morrow's happenings.  
 Oh, yes,—Oh, yes,—I would that thou and I,  
 My grey-hair'd sire, and my brothers dear,  
 Were all safe stow'd in sweet Elysium's land.  
 If there we might but all be friends again—  
 If there my sire would approve our loves,  
 And there my brothers drop their enmities.  
 Methinks, at least I'd hope, that in Elysium  
 There'd be no being born or here or there  
 To generate but local sympathies.  
 That there no circumstances should prevail  
 To breed diversities of interest ;  
 No emulations and no rivalries.  
 That there no Romes or Albas would exist,  
 But we should all be fellow-citizens  
 O' one and the same sweet land :—and yet, methinks  
 Man's scarcely fit for such an after state.  
 Why hast thou look'd so stedfastly upon me ?  
 Metius ! speak to me,—did'st thou hear me, Metius ?  
*Metius.* What did'st thou say ?  
*Horatia.* Why gazest on me so ?

*Metius.* I did forget :—yes,—yes,—I cannot tell—  
In truth I know not—thou did'st strangely move me—  
I know not why,  
But I did think just then of dying swans  
That sing as death is coming.

*Horatia.* Be not sad.

*Metius.* Oh ! would to heaven I were in the grave ;  
That life had run its course,—that this sad work  
Had come unto a close ;—

*Horatia.* What dost thou mean ?

*Metius.* And yet, great heaven ! I revoke the wish.  
It were no joy to mourn Horatia dead,  
Yet fain would I be the surviving one,  
That I might see her safe through this sad life  
Ere I went hence myself.

*Horatia.* Sweet love ! be calm.

*Metius.* Look here on this thy work, Ambition, and  
Repent in dust and ashes.  
Kings o' the earth ! rulers ! and potentates !  
That send your mighty armies forth to war,  
Sack cities, and lay habitations low,  
Ye that go glad to battle, and rejoice  
In furious war, spreading your devastations  
Through a whole nation's breadth :—  
And thou, remorseless Glory, that dost bribe  
Ambition to its acts,—look here !—I say  
Look here, and from henceforth abjure, Ambition,  
Your evil doings.—Is fame worth its cost ?—  
Oh ! is a triumph worth a price so great,  
Whereof a sorrow like this sorrow makes  
But one coin o' the total ?—Fie ! Oh, fie !—  
Go,—get thee to some corner, fell Ambition !  
To blush at recollection of the ills  
Thou 'st wrought 'mongst human kind !

*Horatia.* Art weeping, Metius ?

*Metius.* Who, I, my love ?—weep,—I ?  
I wept not, did I, sweet Horatia ?

*Horatia.* Oh ! yes, thou did'st weep :—yea, in sooth thou did'st.  
For look thy tears did drop upon my cheek  
As thou did'st kiss me.

*Metius.* I am clean unmann'd.

*Horatia.* Nay, thou must not weep so,—thou must not weep,  
For 'tis not like a man.—Why look now, love,  
How brave I am,—I do not weep,—but yet  
Thou 'lt make me weep an' thou wilt not be calm.  
We must life's ills endure as medicines,  
That heavenly physicians minister,  
To us their patients, who may not discern  
Their medicinal virtues.—But look, sweet love,

The morn doth come to end our conference ;  
Indeed thou must begone.

*Metius.* I will not quit thee let what will betide.

*Horatia.* Nay, but thou must begone ; thou must indeed.

*Metius.* Oh ! would the day might catch his death and leave  
The night the undivided sway of earth,  
So we might never part.

*Horatia.* There's no help for 't,  
Thou must indeed begone.

*Metius.* 'Tis so :—but first I'll say a prayer for thee.  
Oh ! if the powers

That do inhabit far above yon sky,  
(And, from our bounded visions are concealed  
By the broad curtain o' the firmament  
So rich in azure beauty, and thick studded  
With the bright jewellery o' the stars.)  
Will ever look on man complacently—

Then may they bless thee to the uttermost.  
And, let who may in this fell bus'ness fall,  
Into thy soul may they some cordial pour  
Of heavenly distillation—some sweet balm  
Shall make thy sorrow cleanly impotent.  
Oh ! may they bless thee, without metes or bounds,—  
Bless thee in all things,—bless thee to the full—  
I do not pray them do't in this or that ;  
But to the very stretch o' their powers tether,  
Even to its exhaustion, may they bless thee  
In their own acceptation o' the term !

*Horatia.* And now, sweet love, farewell ! for look you there,  
The usher-beams, that aye do go before  
Apollo's chariot, to announce his coming,  
'Peer 'bove th' horizon's edge. Sweet love, begone ;  
Or golden Phœbus shall detect our loves  
And blab them to the world. Nay, pray you go.  
I pray thee let me go ; unclasp me, *Metius* !  
Pray now this embrace let it be the last.  
I will be angry an' thou dost not go ;  
For we but strengthen parting's agony  
By this unwise delay. So, now, farewell !

*Metius.* Why then, I go, *Horatia* ! yes, I fly ;  
But 'twere not half so tough a task to die.

[*Exit.*

*Horatia.* How mournfully do his receding steps  
Echo within mine ears ; fainter they grow.  
How desolate I feel ;—hush !—they are lost  
I' the dumb distance : now, he's gone ; yes, gone ;—  
How sad that sounds,—he's gone—he's gone—gone—gone.  
I ne'er may see him more—no more o' that.  
I'll get me home and pray that I may die.

*Exit.*

## ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Tent. (Time towards daybreak.)*

QUINTUS and CÆLIUS CURTIUS are discovered sleeping.

*Enter METIUS CURTIUS.*

*Metius.* It grows t'ward daybreak.—Yet a little while  
Another day is born to man on earth,—  
A solemn day for some,—no more o' that.  
I have not slept,—but that's of small account.  
Not so, my brothers,—they sleep sound enough.  
How thoroughly so? how heedless are they now  
Of all now present and of all to come!  
How now! how now, I say?—Down, busy querist!  
Down, prying Principle! I will not muse  
On what death is! 'Psha!—it is but a sleep  
And nothing more,—a lethargy eternal,—  
The unfelt termination of our being,  
Which did with life begin and with it ends.  
Why dost thou give the lie unto my thoughts,  
Thou strange, dogmatic something i' the breast!  
That without reasons can conviction cause?  
Believe thine eyes, I say,—believe thine eyes.  
Why, what is sleep but revocable death;  
Differing but i' the measure of duration,  
Alike in kind, though different in degree?  
For doth it not involve all consequence  
That to the state of death is incident,  
Save what doth from its permanency flow?  
Look on these sleep-bound, sense-suspended soldiers.  
Where is their consciousness?—Why, clean put out—  
And they no more now of their being reck,  
Than my sword's scabbard of its entity.  
Could death unknowledge them more utterly?  
These are hot-liver'd rufflers, questioner!  
That broad awake would not an insult brook  
For the world's worth, but would th' insulter smite  
Ere he could draw his breath to rail again.  
Now may I to their faces call them knaves,  
Liars, and poltroons, and they'll patient bear it.  
Could death, I pray you, more indiff'rent make them  
Unto offence's sting? Load them with fetters,

And they'll not stir a finger to oppose,  
 Though of all men the hobby's liberty.  
 Could death engender greater passiveness  
 Or meeker temper? Take away their goods,  
 For which, awake, they'd combat lustily,—  
 They'll wrestle not to stay ye, nor pursue.  
 Tell them of glory, which at other time  
 With zealous lust would make their hot bloods boil,  
 And they'll not deign a moment's audience.  
 Proffer them any of life's valuables,  
 And their clench'd fists shall not unclench to take it.  
 Could death, 'beseech ye, more insensible  
 Or reckless make them of what life esteems?  
 Then endlessly but lengthen out their state,  
 And you've therein death to a nicety.  
 What, sceptic something! art still unconvinc'd?  
 Wilt thou still urge there's something yet behind,—  
 Still make me credit it against my will?  
 Why then, thou'rt stubborn; and thou doest it  
 But to disquiet me:—I'll no more on't.  
 I like not such thoughts, they unsettle us.  
 Rather let me for my day's work prepare,  
 And risk the rest.— [A pause.  
 The dirge-like music of her lyre-voice  
 Still warbles in mine ears;—no, in my soul:—  
 "Why then, if thou dost fight them on that sort,  
 "I think the gods will let me love thee still."  
 I've bound her latest love-gift round my form,—  
 The scarf she wove me.—I will in it fight,  
 That haply if th' excitement o' the fray,  
 The burly yellings of our setters-on,  
 With all the other brutish incidents  
 Of the occasion, should go near to rouse  
 The wild-beast part o' me, I'll look on it,  
 And mind me of the holy vow I made her.  
 But hist! day breaks! the first precursive beams,  
 Aurora's outriders, do 'gin to shew  
 I' the eastern clime—the country of the morn.  
 The camp's a-stirring: why then, we must arm.  
 I'll rouse these sleepers;—what, ho, there! brothers! ho!  
 Awake! arise! the hour now is come. [Scene closes.

## SCENE II.—A Tent.

*The HORATII arming. FAUNA and HORATIUS with them.*

*Fauna.* Now, like to Mars himself dost thou appear,  
 Heroic son of Rome!—thus panoplied  
 I' the brave garments of the warrior.



Oh ! that the fire of the martial god  
Himself, may burn in thy stout arm to-day.

*Marcus.* Unto the back-bone, my brave wench, thou art  
Meet for a soldier's bride. Hist ! who comes here ?

*Horatius.* Why, of a truth, here comes the King himself !  
[*Stir without.*]

*Enter TULLUS HOSTILIUS attended.*

*Tullus.* Fair morning to Rome's gallant champions !  
To do ye higher honour, valiant sirs,  
Your King doth thus unto ye condescend,  
And will himself escort ye to the lists.  
Well, ye look bravely : is the inner man  
As well prepared and furnish'd for the work ?

*Marcus.* We hope no less, most royal Hostilius !—  
As three hot horses, ready for the course,  
All fiery with impatience, restless paw  
The trampled earth, and tossing high their heads  
With flowing mane adorn'd, snorting proclaim  
Their boiling ardour ; so do we, O King !  
Impatiently endure the interval  
That stands betwixt us and the hour of act ;  
And would o'erleap it at one lusty bound,  
Could we but do it.

*Tullus.* Bravely said, stout sirs ;  
By all our hopes ! this is a toward mood.  
And if ye have all duties duly done,  
That do to private kinsmanship pertain,  
Why let us forth at once unto the lists,  
With early morning in our company.

*Marcus.* O King ! we could not well more ready be.

*Tullus.* Why, be it so then : now, Horatius,  
Wilt give thy blessing to thy mettled boys  
Ere forth they move ?

*Horatius.* Oh, gracious King !  
That blessing, by your leave, I will convey  
In supplication to the soldier's god.  
Thou mail-clad lord of battles !—soldier god !  
High and renown'd divinity of war !  
Whom, as in unripe youth  
And middle years, so now, when time hath shed  
Upon mine hairs the hoary line of age,  
I worship ;—I do suppliant thee invoke  
That on the heads of this high-mettled leash  
Of thy stout pupils, thou wilt on this day  
Shower success.—May Rome by them come off  
Victorious ; or, if haply they should fall,  
May they with golden honour gilded be  
From head to foot, and to posterity

Become a theme of never-ending praise.  
War-mighty Mars ! grant this entirely.  
And now, my sons ! my noble sons ! move on ;  
And victory sit on your stalwart swords. [*They embrace.*  
*Tullus.* Now move we forth.—What ho, there ! bid  
The trumpets sound their very bravest peal,  
And let Rome's hosts their gallant heroes greet  
With loudest acclamations as they pass.  
Right glad we are that the brave hour's come.  
Ye gods ! be now propitious unto Rome. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*A Tent.*

*The CURIATII discovered armed; Alban nobles waiting to conduct them to the lists.*

*Metius.* So, now then for our closing intercourse.  
Brothers, your hands.—I do remember me,  
'Twas in the self-same hour we became  
Three living souls ; and who is he shall say  
The self-same hour may not see us now  
Pass from amongst the earth's inhabitants ?  
It cannot then be much amiss for us  
To embrace, as though we ne'er should meet again.  
You've harbour'd doubts, as I but too well know,  
That I should fail ye in this mortal pinch.  
Those doubts dismiss ;—ye need not be afraid.  
In spirit I may vary from yourselves,  
But not in act shall I be found at fault.  
I'll fight my best ; and better perhaps than ere  
I fought, when fighting better match'd my will.  
Then fear ye not :—believe that I shall do  
An able third-part in to-day's to-do.

*Quintus.* Metius ! we harbour not a tittle's doubt  
That thou wilt do thy duty at this pinch.

*Metius.* So be it :—thus then let us now embrace.  
They that survive shall not regret that we  
Upon the deed's brink parted lovingly. [*They embrace.*  
Shade of my soldier-sire ! if thou art  
Of judgment capable, thou shalt approve  
My outward 'haviour in this enterprise !  
Shade of my gentle mother ! if thou, too,  
Hast an existence, and of earthly things  
Can'st cognizance exert—thou shalt approve  
The spirit in the which I do the deed !  
And now, sirs, lead us forth : our swords be drawn !—

*Alban nobles.* What, ho !—make way there ;—ho ! without  
there,—ho !  
Now Alba's champions to their proud post go ! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*Adjoining the Lists.*

*Roman and Alban forces under arms. Concourse of people. Enter at one side, as in procession, TULLUS HOSTILIUS, the elder HORATIUS, the HORATII, Roman officers, &c., &c. At the other, METIUS FUFFETIUS, the CURIATII, Albans, &c., &c. Shouts and acclamations.*

*Tullus.* Now, welcome to the morn of this great day,  
Wherein, or Rome or Alba's sov'reignty  
Shall be establish'd.—Welcome, brave Fuffetius !  
And welcome, too, bold Curiatii !—  
We, with a soldier's fellow-feeling, greet ye,  
Albeit 'gainst us you do draw to-day.  
Oh ! we do burn to have this high feat done.  
To have the end the fates have fore-ordain'd,  
Wrought out and brought to pass ! say, valiant Alban,  
Are all things ready ?—

*Fuffetius.* Yea, in very sooth !  
Nor for a moment need we from the lists  
Our sev'ral champions stay.

*Tullus.* Then, in Mars' name !  
Let's on, I say, and, without more ado,  
Let our bold heroes lustily fall to.  
Ye valiant sons of Rome ! unto whose swords,  
Rome doth confidingly her all commit,  
What need ye i' the way of stimulant  
To resolute performance of your vows  
That lacks presentment here ?—When, not alone,  
(As eager overlookers of your deeds,)  
Your martial fellows, envious of your lot,  
In panting admiration, throng around ;  
But hither trooping come, in anxious haste,  
Acquaintance, kinsfolk, and dear relatives,  
(All for whom generous valour should have care)  
To see your triumph and to pray for ye.  
But there's no need that I should ye harangue.  
Your gleaming eyes, clench'd fists, dilated nostrils,—  
Your restless carriage, your whole portance, sirs,  
Proclaim the noble ardour of your souls.  
We'll but invoke the blessing of the gods,  
And then to fighting without further stay.  
Hear us, ye tutelar gods of warlike Rome !—  
And chiefly thou, renowned god of war !—  
And thou too, earliest of Rome's line of kings,  
To godship now promoted, Romulus !  
Briefly we pray you to befriend us now.  
Yea, at this time, the most momentous day  
That ever yet the Roman annals knew,

Vouchsafe rich blessing to the Roman swords.  
 Yea, unto us the better fortune give,  
 Else shall that Rome, 'till now by you preserv'd,  
 Bow low in servitude to Alban lords!  
 And now then,—onward there unto the lists!—  
 Shout, Romans, for the brave Horatii!

*[Shouts and acclamations by the Romans.]*

*Fuffetius.* Soft, by your leave, we too would briefly speak  
 The gallant youths that strike for us to-day.  
 Brave Curiatii! a word to you :—  
 What now King Tullus hath to these discours'd  
 Should no less weightily yourselves affect.  
 Who look on Rome, that look not too on you?  
 What doth Rome peril in this noble strife  
 That Alba risks not too?—Who care for these,—  
 As kinsmen, comrades, relatives, or friends,—  
 But you shall find their counterpart 'mongst us?  
 What shall Rome gain, if she do win, that we  
 Winning, may not gain as abundantly?  
 By these considerations be ye then  
 No less arous'd than they.—Then do your best!—  
 Fight as becomes the prize that is at stake.  
 Aye,—and moreover, lose not view o' this :—  
 If you survive, you live to wear a fame  
 Than which a richer never graced a man.  
 You live to be the foremost of the state,  
 In honour, reputation, and renown.  
 And if you die, (which may the gods forbid)  
 Why, you do die upon a glorious sort,  
 And to your memories—(as to their sons,  
 Sires their grosser wealth bequeath)—do leave  
 Your noble fame, a rich inheritance.  
 There needs no more, I see; there needs no more.  
 Be resolute: be brave: and may the gods  
 Your swords succeed. Shout then, my countrymen!  
 Shout, Alba! for the Curiatii.

*[Shouts and acclamations by the Albans.]*

*Tullus.* Out-shout them Rome! for the Horatii.  
 How now?—what's now afoot?

*METIUS CURIATIUS stepping forward.*

*Metius.* Dictator! by your leave, I'd briefly speak  
 My kinsmen adversaries.

*Fuffetius.* Curiatius!  
 It were ill manners to deny you aught,  
 Being that you are; say that you list; we bide  
 Your leisure ere we on.

*Metius.* Cousins of Rome, and sometime play-fellows!  
 I do beseech ye hearken to my words,

And give them credit for sincerity.  
 Most heartily it grieves this soul o' mine  
 That being that we are by nat'ral ties,  
 By pers'nal friendship and past intercourse,  
 And other cause not utterable here,  
 We this day meet upon such hostile sort.  
 Would that the fates had plann'd it otherwise.  
 But since they do compel me to the deed,  
 I'd have ye know the mood wherein I fight.  
 I fight you from necessity, not choice ;  
 I fight ye as I'd fight bone of my bone,  
 Flesh of my flesh ;—I fight ye grudgingly.  
 No coward e'er went against a foe  
 With more reluctance (though from other cause,)  
 Than I 'gainst you to-day. I seek no fame,  
 No personal honour, and no self-renown.  
 To spare your lives, I'd let ye hew me down  
 Without a counter-thrust, were what's at stake  
 Mine own, and not my country's. If you fall,  
 (Which be as heav'n decrees,) I'll do my best  
 To stead those left behind and dear to ye,  
 And get them gentle handling. If I fall,  
 Do ye likewise for me. Now, I beseech you,  
 Let us embrace as kinsmen lovingly.  
 Let us forget past animosities,  
 All paltry and all puerile dislikes,  
 If ever such did in our souls find place,  
 And let us fight and fall in charity  
 One t' wards the other.

*Tullus.* Now, by all the gods !

A very courteous soul. What say our men  
 In answer hereunto ?

*Marcus.* Cousin of Alba ! for your courtesy  
 We give you thanks ; but for your charity,  
 An' it so please you, we will none of it.  
 We are bluff soldiers, cousin, and prize not  
 Nor comprehend these fine-spun sentiments.  
 It was your wont, when we were boys together,  
 Something o'er superciliously to bear  
 Yourself towards us, and to deem our tongues  
 More dauntless than our swords ; herein, to-day,  
 Your misconceptions we would rectify.  
 We challenge ye to mortal emulation !  
 A challenge ! yea, a challenge ! a defiance !

[*Shouts from the Romans.*]

*Cælius.* Your challenge, cousins, don't acceptance lack.

[*Shouts from the Albans.*]

*Marcus.* So much the better :—we'd not have it back.

*Metius.* Amen ! Amen !—we fight unequally.

Your wills and deeds conform,—mine disagree.  
I have no more to say. Now, general,  
The signal when you please.

*Fuffetius.* Yea ; but a word,—  
This scene hath troubled us ; for it accords  
With certain rumours that have reach'd our ears,  
Importing that your mettle, Curiatius !  
Out o' condition just now something is.

*Metius.* How, sir Dictator ?—

*Fuffetius.* Nay, thy temper curb.  
We have too much at stake to mince the matter.  
There are that have misgivings of thy zeal.

*Metius.* Who are they ?—

*Fuffetius.* Nay ; it doth not need to tell.

*Metius.* Then, I shall speak them i' the lump, Dictator !  
(*To the Alban people.*) Friends !—Fellow-Albans !—and good  
countrymen !

Albeit these your doubts go near to move  
The restive temper that I got at birth,—  
I will not quarrel with ye, but with patient.  
I've learn'd to think that patience more becomes  
We human-kind,—we things of flesh and blood,—  
Than hot and haughty bearing, though the world  
The latter more esteems. Hear me, my friends :—  
If you to-day do want a thorough hero ;  
So thorough, that he chuckles while he fights,—  
So eaten up of selfish lust of fame  
That he'd not be withheld for all the world  
From such a chance of getting glorified,—  
Why, you are like in me to miss your man.  
But, if you are content  
To have a man who, though against his will,  
Will fight his best because he's bound to do't,—  
One that hath ever had a spotless fame  
As a stout soldier, and a dauntless man,—  
Why here I am the office to assume.  
Now say, my countrymen, do you accept,  
Or, doubting me, reject my services ?—

*Albans.* We doubt you not, brave Curiatius !  
The Curiatii :—huzza !—huzza !

[*Shouts.*]

*Fuffetius.* You pledge yourself to do your worst 'gainst  
Rome !

*Metius.* No : I say not, I'll do my worst 'gainst Rome :—  
But do my best for Alba.

*Fuffetius.* That, in sooth,  
Is a distinction shall but little harm us  
No further carried.—Tullus, art thou ready ?

*Tullus.* Ready ? an' hour ago : for heaven's love, on.  
And let us waste away no further time.

*Fuffetius.* Sound then the trumpets :—onward to the lists !  
The Curiatii—shout for them, Alba ! [*Trumpets and acclamations.*]

*Tullus.* Rome ! rend the skies for the Horatii !—

Espouse our cause, ye gods !—

*Fuffetius.* (*aside.*) Now, ne'er before  
Did I see kinsmanship so stickled for ?  
The great gods grant he prove a proper man,  
'Tis now too late to vary from our plan.

[*Exeunt omnes as in procession. Flourish of trumpets.*  
*As the concourse file off, HORATIA is seen following*  
*in the rear, wrapt in a mantle.*]

SCENE V.—*The Lists.*

*Enter on either side as in procession, Roman and Alban forces.*

TULLUS HOSTILIUS, the elder HORATIUS, the HORATII, METTUS  
FUFFETIUS, Roman and Alban Citizens, People, &c. &c. FUFFE-  
TIUS, the Alban Soldiery and People, pass to the off-sides of the  
lists. The HORATII and CURIATII respectively embrace and enter  
the lists amid loud acclamations. Roman soldiery and people  
close round the lists on the hither side, concealing them from  
view. HORATIA stands forward as in the rear of the concourse.  
*Flourish of trumpets. The conditions of the combat are sup-  
posed to be repeating in the distance.*

*Horatia.* I heard his very charitable words,  
The last perchance I'll ever hear him speak.  
Down, rebel feeling ! down, perverse regret !  
What though it may be hard, that one so lov'd  
Should to a feat of life and death move on,  
And yet his mistress may not pray for him !  
Down, I say, down :—there is no remedy.  
I am resolved to pray for neither side.  
I leave it to the gods ;—their will be done.  
Yea, they must widow or unbrother me,  
Even as they see best.—I will not wear them  
With prayers and supplications : they best know  
What's best for all.—They read the combat's terms—  
But a few minutes more and it is finished,  
The tragedy is ended ! Oh ! I would  
I could control these shudders, for they shake  
My frame to its foundations :—Hush ! what's that ?

[*Sudden flourish of trumpets and acclamations.*]

*Romans.* The Horatii ! the Horatii for Rome !

*Albans.* Jove speed the Curiatii for Alba !

*Horatia.* Now, now, they go about it ; they begin.  
How deathly-sick I feel ! I'll bide me here  
Beside this aged Roman : he shall tell me  
How the fight goes. I cannot look on it.  
Hark ! hark ! how dread it sounds ! hark ! hush ! hark ! hark !  
[*Second flourish, combat commencing amid loud uproar.*]

*Romans.* The Horatii! the Horatii for Rome!

*Albans.* The Curiatii for Alba! ho!

*Horatia.* Hark! I can hear them! I can catch the clash  
O' their swift-falling swords! eternal gods!  
Let me drop dead! hark! hist! hist! hist!  
There's none dead yet!—hush!—hark!—there's none dead yet!

[*Sudden and tumultuous shouts of triumph from the Albans.*

Ha! what was that? why shouted Alba then?

Good sir! kind sir! is either Roman hurt?

Tell me, beseech you!

*Old Roman.* Oh! a sorry outset!

*Horatia.* O! tell me,—for the love of heaven, tell me!

What's taking place,—what is the matter, sir?

*Old Roman.* The Roman Hostus lies a-dying, girl!

The gods preserve us!—

*Horatia.* Why farewell, Hostus!—brother, fare thee well!

Fair fare thy soul!—Hark! good now, what was that?

[*Sudden and loud shouts of triumph from the Roman people.*

Kind sir! why did Rome shout?—Doth he revive?—

Doth Hostus live again?

*Old Roman.* Maid! praise the gods,

There is an Alban down!

*Horatia.* Which,—which,—which is 't?

*Old Roman.* Methinks 'tis Quintus, but the dust so hides them,  
I scarce can tell.

*Horatia.* I pray thee look again.

*Old Roman.* Yea, 'tis young Quintus,—now I see him plain.

*Horatia.* What am I made of?—Why am I so tough?

[*Renewed shouts of triumph from the Albans.*

Ha!—what was that?—O gods! I would go mad!

Why, what was that! good sir, why, what was that?

*Old Roman.* The gods do frown on Rome.

*Horatia.* Why?—why?—O! why?

*Old Roman.* Another Roman is a lifeless corpse,  
And Marcus only lives.

*Horatia (kneeling.)* Ye gracious powers!

Will ye look on and see this butchery?—

Will ye allow the creatures of your hands

To blast each other thus?—Forbid it, heaven!

My gallant Marcus!—Marcus, my beloved!

What two upon thee,—it is woeful odds,—

O! they will kill thee—yea, they will; they must.

O! spare his life, ye gods!—O! spare his life.

Spare him that was my mother's chiefest joy

And my young childhood's champion! Spare, O! spare

My mother's darling, and my sire's pride!

[*Loud shouts from the Albans, with reproachful cries from the Romans.*

Ha! what means this?



*Romans.* Shame ! shame ! Horatius !—he retreats—shame ! shame !

*Horatia.* Silence, ye brutes !—silence, blood-thirsty things.  
 Silence, I say,—why should he not retreat ?  
*Marcus Horatius !—Marcus !—brother !—brother !*  
 Come from the lists :—come out :—ne'er mind :—come out.  
 Oh ! he heeds not my voice :—none heed me : none.  
 These shouts drown all :—hark !—hark ! [*Shouts renewed.*]  
 Now, now, they hew him down,—both on him, both !  
 Death ! if thou hast a grain of pity in thee  
 Take me from out this world !—Ha, gods ! what now ?

[*Shouts by the Romans.*]

*Romans.* Brave youth !—good youth !—valiant Horatius !—  
 He did but feign retreat :—huzza !—good youth !  
*Horatia.* What hath he done ?—returns he to the fight ?  
*Romans.* Now, now, he hath him :—now he strikes him down.  
 He falls :—he dies :—huzza !— [*Tumultuous shouts from Rome.*]  
*Horatia.* Old man ! I do conjure thee quickly tell  
 Who is 't hath fallen ?

*Old Roman.* Be of good cheer, maid !  
 Our country's safe. Our sturdy champion  
 Hath slain the stouter o' the combatants ;  
 He that survives by wounds and loss of blood's  
 An easy prey. Huzza, Horatius !

*Horatia.* Old man, what saidst thou ?

*Old Roman.* Maiden, pray be still.

*Horatia.* By the firmament of heaven ! I conjure thee,  
 Look stedfastly, and say if it be so :—  
 The Roman Marcus, and the Alban who  
 Doth wear the scarf, do fight alone ?

*Old Roman.* 'Tis so.

*Horatia.* (*suddenly kneeling.*) Hear me, ye gods ! hear me, ye  
 occupiers

O' the realms above our heads !  
 Suddenly from out their nostrils withdraw  
 The breath of life ; strike them both dead !—both !—both !  
 Let neither win, but both drop dead at once.  
 Into the regions of the shadow of death  
 Plunge them together instantaneously !  
 Awful may be the prayer, I pray it still.  
 That neither may the horrid triumph get,  
 Unto the shades with both !  
 Let sudden death leap on them ! let it come  
 By plague, by pestilence, by sudden fire,  
 By the fork'd lightning, or the thunderbolt,  
 By some dread means ye have at your high call  
 Flash on 'em sudden, simultaneous death,  
 And let them drop co-corpses to the earth !

[*Tumultuous shouts of triumph from Rome.*]

*Romans.* Victory !—victory !—victory to Rome !

*Horatia.* And there's an end. How now, what ails me now ?

*Romans.* Victory !—victory !—victory to Rome !

*Horatia.* Why, what's a-happening ? I do feel as though

A viper had got tangled in my brain,  
And writh'd, and curl'd, and wriggled to get out.

I think I'm going mad : 'suppose I am ?

Methinks 't were better that I should go mad.

But hist ! I want to reason : let me see.

This shouting means that he is dead and gone ;

And "he" means Metius ; that is, Metius, he

Is dead and gone : and Metius was the youth

That us'd to love me : no, that I did love.

Well, that's no matter, for we both did love.

Ah ! now I see ; now—now I understand.

But then I promised him that howsoe'er

A certain thing did end, I'd love him still.

Then I must go and see him,—tend his corpse,—

For 'tis not like that any else will do 't.

His sire, mother, brothers—all are dead.

Why do I halt ? Ha ! way there, way !

Make way here—let me pass—make way, I say ?

I go within the lists : make way ! make way !

*FAUNA steps from the crowd.*

*Fauna.* Heavens ! Horatia here ? Horatia, sweet,  
Come with me, come away ; thou must not go.

*Horatia.* Off, I say, off ! let go, let go ; I say.

I will go to him. I must wipe the foam

From off his mouth, the dust from off his brow.

Off ! I say, off ! I'll not be let—off ! off !

*Fauna.* For heaven's love, Horatia ! do it not.

Good people help me. Aid me, good kind folk,

To quiet this poor maid !

*[Several gather round.]*

*Horatia.* Off ! I say off !—ye shall not touch me, fiends !

You did make merry when they struck him down.

I'll not be touched by ye. Off ! I say, off !

Let go, let go :—I'll tear ye piecemeal else.

Why, what am I to you, or you to me ?

Think you I am a Roman ? No, I'm not.

Think you I care for Rome or Roman folk ?

I tell you to your faces, I care not

A rush for Rome. I am an Alban I,

Aye, every inch an Alban ;—let me go !

*Fauna.* We must deny her, we must bear her hence.

*Horatia.* Ha ! let me go, you revellers in blood !

Oh ! that I had a hundred thousand swords,

A hundred thousand firebrands, I'd up

And burn and slay, till I had killed ye all ;

And blotted bloody Rome from out heaven's sight.  
I'd fire the Capitol—kill King and all,—  
And so avenge him ! Let me go, I say !

*Fauna.* Bear her from out the press.  
For heav'n's love help ! hold fast ; here, this way, here !  
Lay her on yonder bank. [*She is borne out shrieking and struggling.*]

SCENE VI.—*Adjoining the Lists.*

HORATIA borne in by FAUNA and others. *They lay her on a bank.*

*Horatia.* Blood-mongers, how I hate ye one and all !  
Ha ! She-wolf, are you there ? [*Sees Fauna.*] I know you well  
You human vulture ! Prithee, fly away  
Unto the lists,—the dead are there, not here.  
Go, go, and gorge upon the fallen's flesh,  
And drink their blood ! ha ! ha ! go, go, ha ! ha !  
Don't hover here, this is a corpseless place !  
See how she flaps her wings ! ha ! ha ! ha ! ha !

*Fauna.* Oh gods ! she's mad.

*Horatia.* You think I know you not.  
I know you well eno' ; you're Fauna, yes.  
Don't think I know you not ; I know you well.  
You are the thing that was to wed that thing  
That was my brother ; he's no brother now ;  
I would he were dead too, and you and all.  
And yet you are an honourable dame !  
Let me get up. I want to curtsy to her.  
I want to do her homage ; let me go.  
So please ye then, most honourable Ma'am !  
Your shall-be bridegroom doubly precious is  
Steep'd in his better's blood ; all honour to ye !  
I curtsy once, I curtsy twice, and thrice.—  
Now I'll sit down again, I'm better now.  
Now I have curtsied, I am satisfied.

[*She rises.*]

*Fauna.* The gods restore her ; what a sight is this !

[*Shouts heard as by parties approaching.*]

*Horatia.* There !—hark at 'em !—hark at the man-baiters !  
Oh ! that I were a pestilence, a plague,  
I'd blast 'em in a moment !—That I were  
The light'ning, at a flash I'd strike 'em dead !  
I'd stop their hootings ! I'd be even with them.

[*Shouts close at hand.*]

Ha ! who's that coming ? Look ! look ! look ! Ha ! ha !  
Hold fast ! hold fast ! or I shall try to kill.  
Look ! look !—it is that bloody thing—look ! look !  
'Tis he that was—no matter—he's not now.  
'Twas that he did it—and he did it so  
The wolf's a lamb unto him !—

*Enter MARCUS HORATIUS gaily, and wearing various parts of the dress of METIUS CURIATIUS, amongst them the scarf wove by HORATIA.*

*Marcus. (To Fauna.)* Now, my stout-hearted wench! my mettled one!

See! I have torn me from applauding mates,  
From the King's praises, from my sire's arms,  
To reap thy greetings:—What think ye of me now?

*Fauna.* Horatius, there are drawbacks on our joy.

*Horatia.* Why com'st thou here, thou gory kinsman-butcher,  
Bedizen'd in this bloody finery?—

Ha! give me that scarf—give me that scarf, I say.  
You wolf! you whelp! Hence, ugliness, avaunt!  
Your eyes are wolf's eyes: you've a vulture's claw.  
Your hands are tiger's paws; you are all blood;  
All gore—get hence, you hungry crocodile!—  
Avaunt, wild beast! don't grin and chuckle here.

*Fauna.* O, gods! I'm going too—

[Swoons.

*Marcus.* How now! How now!—

Why who art thou?—

*Horatia.* Hence, curse!—avaunt!

I'll not be touch'd,—I'll not be handl'd by ye.  
Lacks Rome a hangman?—he is one will do.  
He'd cut his father's throat, an' he could get  
A hurrah by it!—

*Marcus.* How now! How now!

Why, what means this?

*Horatia.* I'll have that scarf, I say—

*Marcus.* This scarf—'twas his that I did vanquish last.  
I wear it as a trophy of the deed.

*Horatia.* Give me a sword! what ho! a sword there, ho!  
Give me a sword that I may cut him down.  
I'll deal him doom for doom! Out o' my sight,  
Loath'd thing! Avaunt! I say.—

*Marcus.* Art thou my sister?—

*Horatia.* Kinsman-slaught'rer!—No.  
No, no, no, no,—Oh! let that syllable  
Peal through the vaults of heav'n—stun the earth,—  
And echo through the regions of the tombs.  
Hear it,—ye natives of the realms above!—  
Hear it,—ye dwellers on this globe of blood!—  
Hear it,—pale population of the graves!—  
(Oh! how I travail with this mighty curse!)  
Hear, Heaven! Hear, Earth!—  
Be witness sun, and moon, and starry sky—  
Witness ye trees, shrubs, flowers, senseless stones!—  
Witness all living and unliving things!  
Ye folk around! and witness too, ye dead!—

Bear witness with one compound voice, that I  
 Eternally abjure my sisterhood ;—  
 That neither here, nor in the world to come,—  
 Alive or dead,—a living soul or corpse,—  
 Absent nor present, near nor far away,—  
 At home, abroad, in life, in death, in youth,  
 Age, sickness, health, in sorrow, or in joy,  
 Nowhere, at no time, in no small'st degree,  
 Will I be sister to this thing of stone.

Because he did it upon such a sort,—  
 Because he revels thus i' the result—  
 With all my soul, with all my heart, and mind,  
 With all my will, my power, and my might,  
 I wrench him from my heart, and curse him, gods !

*Marcus.* Is this my recompense for my brave deed,  
 In sending Rome's weak foes to their last homes ?

*Horatia.* Don't swagger here, incarnate pestilence !  
 Thou husk of vanity, don't swagger here.

Boast not thyself against his memory.  
 Peace, peace, peace, peace, I say, peace, drunk ape ! peace.  
 Red thing ! 'twas love of me and e'en of thee  
 Unstrung his arm,—or he'd have beat ye all.  
 He could have beaten forty thousand such,  
 Aye, with one hand alone, unarm'd, he could,—  
 But that he spared ye in his charity.

*Marcus.* I'll hear no more—

Death ! put this trull to silence.—stop her mouth. [*Stabs her.*]

*Fauna (reviving.)* Heav'n endeth us all—in mercy, do't.  
 Raise her, support her. Youth, what hast thou done ?

*Marcus.* So perish all that do Rome's foes lament !

*Horatia.* Hush ! hush ! no noise, hush ! hush ! I'm better now.

Be still,—hush ! hush—my reason comes again.  
 I'm better now—hist ! gently lay me down :—  
 This same blood-letting hath restored my wits,  
 'T hath done me good, 't hath brought me to again.

Where, where is Marcus ? I did anger him.

Where is my sire ? O ! before I die,

Let me reveal my secret and receive

His pardon. Oh ! will none go fetch him to me ?

[*Exeunt some of the bystanders.*]

Come to me, Marcus !—Marcus, come to me.

I did thee wrong ; forget it and forgive.

My misery, which thou not knowest, Marcus,

Shall plead for me, and win thee to forgive.

[*Stir without.*]

Ah see, he comes, he comes, my sire comes !

O ! this is well. I know that he'll not chide.

*Enter elder HORATIUS, in haste.*

*Horatius.* Where, where, where is she ? — Where ? — Oh !  
 daughter, Oh !

Thou shalt not die. Have mercy, mercy, heaven !  
Oh ! this woe

Doth unworth all that hath been done to-day.

*Horatia.* O ! weep not, sir. I pray thee do not grieve.  
Rather forgive than weep.

*Horatius.* Forgive ! what have I to forgive, my child ?  
Thou wert aye good, and kind, and dutiful ;  
Most good, most kind : thou never gav'st me cause  
To chide thee ne'er so little :—thou wast aye,  
E'en from thy cradle upwards, a good girl ;  
That may my sick-beds testify, and all  
Thy way of life unto the present hour.  
Thou hast been all

Thy gentle mother was before thee, child.

*Horatia.* I thank thee, sir, but I've a thing to tell  
And pray thy pardon for. Oh ! sir, sit down,  
And thou too, Marcus. Let me thus entwine  
An arm round either's neck. Oh ! this is well ;  
This, this is as it should be : yea, for we  
Of our once happy household circle are  
Th' alone remains. Oh ! this, in very deed,  
Is comfortable. I do feel as though  
Departed joy had just come back again  
To spend a few brief moments more within  
My dying heart, ere that life's sun do set.  
But hush ! I do the dawn of death discern—  
Brief let me be. Oh ! then, sir, be not wroth,  
But I did love

My cousin Metius, who lov'd me again.  
Yea, long and tenderly we lov'd each other ;  
But noting that your favour did not seem  
To rest upon him as we could have wish'd,  
We thought it best awhile to hide our loves  
Till haply he had earned it by degrees,  
Which hard he strove to do. And thus did stand  
Matters betwixt us, when this piteous feud  
Broke out 'twixt Rome and Alba. Then, oh ! then,  
We did not dare our passion to divulge,  
The times seem'd so untoward, and we paus'd  
To see how things would end.—I fainter grow.

*Horatius.* Oh, daughter ! say no more on this sad theme ;  
Sorrow, not anger, to thy tale responds.

*Horatia.* I bless thee, sir, for all thy tenderness.  
Indeed we lov'd each other blamelessly,  
And no licentious folly stain'd our course.  
We were not, sir, indifferent unto  
Thine honour'd sanction—we did ever look,  
Did ever hope the time should come at length  
That thou 'dst approve our passion.—Ah ! I sink !

I am a-going now. Oh ! sir, and Marcus,  
 I pray ye kiss me free and fervently.  
 Oh ! I would have my very latest breath  
 Into these tokens, sweet and precious, coin'd  
 Of renovated love and harmony.  
 I must be brief.—  
 Fauna, farewell ! I wish thee every joy  
 Of holy wedlock with my Marcus here.  
 Farewell too, all ! and yet a word, good folk—  
 If he be called to account for this,  
 Be ye not slow to bear full witness to  
 My most unseemly speech and provocation.  
 It shall go far t' extenuate the deed  
 And mitigate attendant penalties.  
 Nay, now mine eyes wax dim, and in mine ears  
 Gather a strange obstruction ; there's no sound  
 Within their portals.—  
 Oh ! you that here do with my sex accord,  
 'Pray you, when I am gone, do unto me  
 Those modest services that shall be meet.  
 Let not an idle curiosity  
 Gaze on me as a spectacle—a show.  
 Now, now I go : I'm going : farewell all !  
 I go, but whither ? 'tis a solemn thing.  
 I would I had not liv'd so much to earth  
 And earthy things,—to selfish creature ends.  
 I would I had a more assured hope.  
 I trust all will go well. Oh ! mark me, mark !  
 Live not unto the creature ; Oh ! live not  
 Unto the earth : it fails us at the last.  
 Beware ! beware in time ! Oh, now I go.  
 I hope all will be well. I'm sinking. Hist !  
 Oh, father ! Marcus ! Oh, Rome ! Rome ! adieu.  
 I hope all will be well. Oh ! oh ! 'tis o'er.

[Dies.

*Horatius.* We'll bury her in some sequester'd nook,  
 Where hubbub never comes ; where the green grass  
 That o'er her grows shall ne'er be trodden down.  
 There shall the daisy and the violet  
 With flowers o' sweetest nature deck her grave,  
 And broider o'er the turf 'neath-where she lies.  
 No weeds shall grow there, and no briers spring  
 'Bove where she rests ; but there her peaceful grave,  
 Far from the buzz and turmoil o' the world,  
 Shall bide secure.  
 These things breed dreary thoughts. Methought but now  
 I heard my heart say, " Let there be no gods,"  
 As often I have known it say before.  
 It is a dismal fancy, but methinks,  
 Our race's purpose it would better serve

To have no gods at all, unless they be  
Gods that will tolerate iniquity.  
But whereto serves the wish, if that the fact  
Therewith accordeth not?—Pah! tush—tush—tush.  
I care not, let it pass. But soft!—what now? [*Stir without.*  
Lo! the King comes. Now, heaven above forbid  
That we should make bad worse!—Fly, Marcus, fly!  
Or we shall add unto this tragedy. [*Exeunt omnes.*

THE END.











